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The Limburg Sermons

Preaching in the Medieval Low Countries at the Turn of the Fourteenth Century

Wybren Scheepsma

Translated by **David F. Johnson**

Series Editor: **Wim Janse**

BRILL

The *Limburg Sermons*

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LEIDEN • BOSTON
2008

Cover illustration: MS The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 70 E 5, f. 3r. Opening miniature of the *Limburg sermons*, with five-petaled flowers in red and blue.

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PREFACE

The greatest landmarks of early Middle Dutch religious literature are without a doubt the mystical works of Hadewijch and Beatrijs van Nazareth. Whereas the adjacent national literatures of the English, the French and the Germans could boast in the same period of an extensive tradition of vernacular sermon literature, the Low Countries lagged far behind in this respect. For quite some time it was even thought that no early Dutch sermons existed at all. All of this changed when the Leiden codicologist J.P. Gumbert subjected manuscript 70 E 5 from The Hague to a careful study and dated it to ca. 1300. This meant that the *Limburg sermons*, contained in this manuscript, must have been composed in the thirteenth century. Thus the Dutch literary tradition did possess an early collection of vernacular sermons after all.

Although J.P. Gumbert published his new dating in 1987, it has taken rather a long time for the importance of this discovery to sink in amongst those working in the field of Dutch studies. In fact, this important detail was first truly noticed in Germany, where the germanicist Kurt Otto Seidel was working on a 'Habilitationsschrift' on the *St. Georgen sermons*, which appeared in 2003. The majority of the *Limburg sermons* consist namely of translations of the *St. Georgen sermons*. It has now become clear that the manuscript from The Hague is one of the two oldest witnesses to this textual tradition, while at the same time, compared to its German source, it retains its own unique character.

It has been recognized for much longer that there are several gems from Middle Dutch mystical literature amongst the *Limburg sermons* that are not translations from Middle High German. Beatrijs van Nazareth's famous treatise *Det sin seven maniren van minnen* [This teaches us seven ways of love] is included here as an independent sermon, while Hadewijch's Letter 10 constitutes a portion of another. The redating of The Hague 70 E 5 meant that these texts were now the oldest textual witnesses to these great Brabantine mystics. Their works are flanked in this collection by a number of remarkable mystic sermons on the Song of Songs for which no parallels in Latin, French or German are to be found. This means that a perhaps small, yet undoubtedly excellent corpus of Dutch sermons had been compiled in the Low Countries of the thirteenth

century, a corpus that should not in the least be seen as separate from the famous mystical writings.

These circumstances were the point of departure for a penetrating literary and cultural/historical study that I conducted at Leiden University from 1998–2002 as part of the research project 'Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de Middeleeuwen' [Dutch literature and culture in the Middle Ages] by Frits van Oostrom. The results of this research were published in *De Limburgse sermoenen. De oudste preken in het Nederlands* (Amsterdam, 2005). This book is an integral translation of that monograph. In the course of its translation a number of smaller errors have been silently corrected and in some places bibliographic references have been updated. An extra appendix has been added containing English translations of two of the *Limburg sermons*. It is my hope that, with this book, a productive episode from the earliest period of Middle Dutch religious literature will find its way to an international audience.

References to the *Limburg sermons* in this book pertain in principle to the entire collection of texts as they survive in ms. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 70 E 5 (manuscript H). A large portion of this collection, namely 32 texts, is nevertheless comprised of translations of the Middle High German *St. Georgen sermons*. The remaining sixteen texts were added to the *Limburg sermons* collection from disparate sources. References to individual *Limburg sermons* employ the numbering used by Kern in his edition (e.g. Ls. 46). In referring to individual *St. Georgen sermons*, I employ the common system used in current research when citing Rieder's edition (e.g. Rd. 39). In some cases both systems are used (e.g. Ls. 3/Rd. 39).

Citations of the *Limburg sermons*, unless otherwise noted, are to J.H. Kern, *De Limburgsche sermoenen*, which provides a complete edition of manuscript H. Constant reference was also made to the manuscript itself, and minor transcription errors made by Kern have been silently corrected. Passages added to the manuscript reading appear here between pointed brackets (< >) and 'excess' passages between aquare ones ([ ]). My punctuation differs from Kern's, who in this respect as well tried to remain as faithful to the manuscript as possible. My primary concern has been to maximise the legibility of the frequently challenging Middle Dutch of manuscript H. To this end I have employed modern punctuation, and the use of *u*, *v* and *w*, and *i* and *j* have been normalised to reflect modern usage as much as possible. Capitalization, including that of *nomina sacra*, has also been kept to a minimum.

These rules have been applied as consistently as possible in citations of editions of other medieval texts.

References to the *St. Georgen sermons* are in principle taken from Karl Rieder's *Der St Georgener Prediger*, although he based his edition on the 'wrong' manuscript, ms. A. The 'right' manuscript, ms. G, has been chosen as the basis for a new edition of the *St. Georgen sermons*, which is currently being prepared at Essen under the direction of Kurt Otto Seidel, but which will appear too late to be of benefit to this study. For Rd. 71–75, which are not contained in the incomplete ms. G, the reading in ms. Z has been used. When other editions were not available, references to G are after the preliminary diplomatic edition provided to me by the editing project in Essen.

Sigla have been assigned to all corpus manuscripts of the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburgse sermoenen* (containing five or more texts that belong to the corpus). Seidel's study of the *St. Georgen sermons* provides an overview of the most recent state of affairs, initially in his unpublished Bielefeld 'Habilitationsschrift' (1994), and later in the published edition of 2003. In the back of the book the reader will find an overview of the sigla used for the manuscripts referred to in this study.

There remains for me only to acknowledge my gratitude to a number of institutions and individuals who have contributed in some way to the completion of this book. First and foremost I would like to thank the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek/Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, who provided me with an ample subsidy for the translation of this book. I also like to thank Brill for publishing this book in *Brill's Series in Church History*. And of course I would like to thank the translator, David F. Johnson, for a period of intense and pleasant collaboration. Nigel F. Palmer (Oxford) regularly lent a hand when together we were unable to find a solution to a translation problem. The translations of (Middle High) German passages were vetted by Regina D. Schiewer (Augsburg), for which I owe her my heartfelt thanks. The translations of Old French passages were obligingly checked by my colleagues in Leiden, Paul Smith and Julia Szirmai, and Lori Walters (Florida State University) also contributed in this respect.

Leiden, December 2007
Wybren Scheepsma

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SIGLA

In this book corpus manuscripts from the *Sankt Georgener Predigten* and *Limburg sermons* traditions are referred to by the following sigla:

A	Freiburg im Breisgau, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. 464
Am	Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek, I E 28
B1	Krakau, Biblioteka Jagiellońska (*olim* Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz), ms. germ. qu. 1087
B2	Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, ms. germ. qu. 1079
Bi	Bielefeld, Ratsgymnasium, cod. O 7
Br1	Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1959
Br2	Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, II 2454
Di	Dillingen, Kreis- und Studienbibliothek, 131
F	Fulda, Hessische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Theol. Aa. 8^0 79
G	Karlsruhe, Sankt Georgen Cod. germ. XXXVI
H	The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 70 E 5
La	Cuyk, Kruisherenklooster St. Agatha, C 20 (handschrift-Langenberg)
N	Klosterneuburg, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 864
Ph	London, Library of University College, Ms. Germ. 11 (*olim* Phillips MS. 643)
Sa	Sarnen, Bibliothek des Benediktiner-Kollegiums, cod. 169
St	Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, cod.theol.phil. 8°
U	Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek, Cod. C 800
W	Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2702
W2	Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 15.258
Z	Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, Ms. C 76

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This first chapter is intended as a thorough introduction to the *Limburg sermons* and their critical history. We begin by tracing the adventures of the crucial Hague manuscript, followed by a brief overview of medieval preaching practices, with special attention to the vernacular tradition. Next we discuss the relationship between the *Limburg sermons* and the Middle High German *St. Georgen sermons*. The following section deals with a group of texts from the Rhineland that exhibits an affinity with the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons*, and which may or may not be connected with the Cistercian order. The chapter concludes with an outline of the development of vernacular religious literature in the Southern Netherlands.

1.1 *The Hague Manuscript*

During the French occupation of the Netherlands, the monasteries in the 'Departement de la Meuse inférieure', or 'Nedermaas' ['Lower Meuse'], which included both Limburgs and a portion of North Brabant, were secularised by the revolutionary regime. In practice this meant that the monasteries were dissolved, and that the government confiscated all their goods and possessions. The greater part of the confiscated book collections were auctioned off in 1800, but a limited number of old and undated volumes were held back from sale. Following Napoleon's final defeat in 1815 Limburg was split into two parts, North and South. Maastricht became the capital of the northern portion and as such the seat of government. In the 1830s the unsold collection of medieval manuscripts and incunabula from Limburg monasteries was discovered in a backroom of the Governor's mansion, a building that had been used for the same purpose during the French occupation. Given the Governor's lack of interest in all these old books, he wrote a letter to the librarian of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague, J.W. Holtrop. He included a list of the manuscripts and a brief description of their

contents, which was later published by A.J. Flament.[1] One thing led to another. In 1839 the entire collection, packed in eleven chests, was shipped to the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in far-off The Hague. There the manuscripts and incunabula from the Limburg monasteries were distributed to interested libraries throughout the Netherlands. In the end the lion's share remained in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, while not a single copy remained in Limburg itself.[2]

One of those eleven chests from Masstricht contained the *Limburg sermons*, the subject of this book. When the collection was catalogued, it received the number 377 and the following description on the bill of delivery: *377. Sermonen boek—Een Hoogduitsch gedicht over de passie* [Book of sermons—a High German poem of the Passion].[3] The catalogue number applied in Maastricht can still be read on the inside of the flyleaf, twice, in fact.[4] The 'book of sermons' was added to The Hague collection and received a new shelf number: The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 70 E 5.[5] In what follows the manuscript is referred to by the siglum H (Appendix I provides a codicological description of the manuscript).

> From the presence of fragmentary plant material and imprints in the manuscript it appears that manuscript H was at one time used to dry plants. Given the unlikelihood that this occurred when the book resided in the Governor's mansion, this botanical material must be dated to before 1800. On f. 108r an imprint of a plant is clearly visible. Based on the presence of numerous fragments it was determined that the plant in question was *Anthriscus cerefolium*, or garden chervil.[6] Unfortunately this herb was common throughout all of Europe, so this identification cannot help us arrive at a more precise localisation for manuscript H.

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[1] Flament 1888–1889, XL–LV (Appendix XVI: 'Catalogus van boeken and handschriften gevonden op the Provinciaal Gouvernementshotel te Maastricht in 1839').

[2] For the book collection from Maastricht see especially Deschamps 1954, 5–11, Hermans 1987 and Stooker & Verbeij 1997, vol. 1, 38–40.

[3] Flament 1888–1889, LIII.

[4] Above the flyleaf in pencil is written: 'K. 6. (377 Maastricht),' while in the middle of the same leaf a label has been affixed upon which is written in ink: 'K. 6. (Trai. a/M 377).'

[5] Brugmans [et al.] 1922, 135 no. 529.

[6] I am very grateful to Wout J. Holverda (Nationaal Herbarium Nederland, Leiden) for this identification (letter 25–9–2001). Madaus 1976, 1075–1077 describes garden chervil as the non-poisonous 'counter-part' of poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), a poisonous plant cultivated for its medicinal properties.

Fig. 1. MS The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 70 E 5. View of the exterior.

Once manuscript 70 E 5 had finally been deposited in a public collection, it soon attracted the attention of scholars. In 1840 the German scholar Julius Zacher visited the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, where he examined manuscript H. He dated the script of the codex to the end of the fourteenth century, but was of the opinion that its contents were at least half a century older. In the text toward the end of the codex, designated in the Maastricht list as 'poem on the Passion', Zacher recognised a Middle Dutch Passion play. In his view—which was later proven correct—this was the oldest extant remains of Dutch dramatic poetry. Almost immediately Zacher prepared an edition of this important text, which we shall henceforth refer to as the *Maastrichtse passiespel* [*Maastricht Passion play*] (see § 2.14).[7] To this edition was added, as a kind of bonus, two Middle Dutch sermons from manuscript H.[8]

Moreover, Zacher provides an otherwise innocuous detail concerning the journey of the chests from Maastricht to The Hague, which would lead to an inordinate amount of confusion. He reports namely that the eleven chests were sent to Holland from the monastery of Slavanten in Maastricht, a detail not known from any other source. The monastery of Slavanten was situated near the castle of Lichtenberg, perched on the flanks of the Sint-Pietersberg, across from the city of Maastricht. It was founded in 1455 and belonged to the Observant branch of the Franciscan order.[9] Apparently the former monastery of Slavanten functioned in 1839 as a transit port for the eleven chests of books. It is especially in German studies dealing with the *Maastrichtse passiespel* that this reference to Slavanten has taken on a life of its own, and it is often claimed that manuscript 70 E 5 was produced at this monastery of friars minor in Maastricht. There is no basis whatsoever for such an attribution.

Zacher's edition of the two sermons from manuscript H attracted the attention of another Germanist, Wilhelm Wackernagel, who had begun to collect old German sermons and prayers. He recognised the contents of both texts as translations of sermons from an originally German collection, of which various manuscripts were known to him. One of these, the thirteenth-century Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. St. Georgen 36 (G), had recently been introduced to the scholarly

[7] Zacher 1842a.
[8] Zacher 1842b, with Ls. 1 at pp. 350–356 and Ls. 22 at pp. 356–357.
[9] The history of Slavanten was written by Van Heel, 1952.

world by F.J. Mone.[10] Another manuscript, one prepared by the Swiss priest Albrecht der Kolbe at the behest of Margarete Mörlin, wife of the *Amtmann* (a civic official) of Feldkirch, Zacher knew to reside in a private collection. It now bears the shelf mark Freiburg (im Breisgau) Universitätsbibliothek, 464 (A). Wackernagel requested and received from his Dutch colleague W.J.A. Jonckbloet further information about The Hague manuscript. Unfortunately, Wackernagel died in 1868, before he could publish his findings. His student, Max Rieger, developed the materials pertaining to the German sermons of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and published their collective results in 1876 under the title, *Altdeutsche Predigten und Gebete aus Handschriften*.[11]

The larger significance of manuscript G for this tradition is emphatically stressed in the collaborative work by Wackernagel and Rieger. Because a mark of ownership in this old and important manuscript identifies its place of origin as the Benedictine monastery of St. Georgen, near Villingen in the Black Forest, its contents have ever since been associated with an otherwise unidentified 'Preacher of St. Georgen.' The connection between this collection of sermons and St. Georgen is moreover spurious: the abbey's mark of ownership dates to the seventeenth century. Following the disastrous library fire of 1637, the abbot of St. Georgen took great pains to augment the monastery's collections. Manuscript G consequently turned up in St. Georgen; it may well have been purchased from a convent in the area, but nothing further is known for certain.[12]

During the 1870s and into the nineteenth century, Dutch scholars, too, began to exhibit an interest in ms. 70 E 5. P.J. Cosijn was the first to recognise the linguistic importance of its contents. He regarded the manuscript as an exceptionally pure source of Limburg dialect material from the thirteenth century, a language that the great Maaslandish poet Hendrik van Veldeke—who wrote his *Eneas* in the period 1175–1185—is supposed to have used throughout his varied oeuvre. It was Cosijn who introduced the title *Limburg sermons* for The Hague collection as a whole. He was primarily interested in the first element of this title; that the contents of manuscript H consisted of sermons interested him only

[10] Mone 1835; Mone 1839 provides a glossary to manuscript G.

[11] Wackernagel & Rieger 1964; for the background to Wackernagel and Rieger's 'co-production' see also Lüders 1957, 200–212. On ms. H see Wackernagel & Rieger 1964, 262–271, 384–393 and 541–544.

[12] Cf. Rieder 1908, XIII and Lüders 1972, 163–164 n. 5.

slightly. Based among other things on the word *fone*, which he found in one of the sermons and which is an irrefutable reference to the *föhn* or fall wind that blows from the Alps into the valleys to the north, Cosijn concluded that the texts from Limburg were translations of Middle High German exemplars.[13]

Besides Cosijn, G.D. Franquinet and the famed Leiden linguist H. Kern were interested in the linguistic aspects of the *Limburg sermons* in manuscript H.[14] None of them ever doubted the Limburg origins of the dialect. In retrospect it is remarkable that the language of manuscript 70 E 5 was so unerringly recognised as something special. The eleven chests contained several hundred volumes from Limburg, all of which might reasonably be assumed to have been written for the most part in the same region. Concerning manuscript H in particular, Cosijn knew little more than that it had come from a monastery in Maastricht. They simply assumed without further ado that it must have originated in the same area. Presumably it was manuscript H's advanced age—of which they were but insufficiently aware—that put nineteenth-century scholars on the trail of the *Limburg sermons*. The fact that the texts in this ancient manuscript were close to their Middle High German source, which lent them a more eastern aspect, may also have been a significant factor.

Franquinet placed manuscript 70 E 5 without ceremony in the Maastricht tertiary convent Maagdendries, without providing any direct justification.[15] A label affixed to the lower board of the codex may well have been legible in his day. The text can now only be made out with the help of ultraviolet light. And indeed, it reads 'Maagdendries N° 11'.[16] This label was in all likelihood added in 1794, when an

[13] Cosijn 1874a, 64–65; *fone* appears in Ls. 4 (cf. Kern 1895, 215,11–16) and in its German counterpart, Rd. 40. For his definition Cosijn could make use of the glossary to manuscript G in Mone 1839, 504,74; Wackernagel & Rieger 1964, 387–388 had already remarked upon this important word for the localisation of the *SGP*.

[14] Cosijn 1874b analyses the grammar of H and Cosijn 1875 provides a select glossary to the *Limburg sermons*. H. Kern 1879 is an edition of Ls. 2 and H. Kern 1894 provides the (fragmentary) text of Ls. 17 according to ms. The Hague, KB, 73 G 25, which belonged to the then newly discovered Weesp collection. Franquinet 1880 edits Ls. 21 according to ms. 70 E 5.

[15] Franquinet 1880, 205.

[16] In 1954, Manuscript H received a place in the exhibition 'Handschriften uit beide Limburgen' (Manuscripts from both Limburgs) prepared by J. Deschamps. At that time the label was apparently still legible (See Deschamps 1954, 44; cf. Deschamps 1972, 257).

inventory was made of the manuscripts and printed books confiscated from monastic libraries by the French.[17] Manuscript H was thus in the Maastricht tertiary convent at the end of the eighteenth century. That Maagdendries was not the original owner of the manuscript will be discussed further below. Nevertheless, in Dutch scholarship on the *Limburg sermons* written since Franquinet H is as a rule unquestioningly associated with Maagdendries.[18]

The tertiary establishment Maagdendries, dedicated to St. Andrew, was built on a fallow field (a 'dries', in the local dialect) in Maastricht. Maagdendries was originally a house for pious virgins, and it appears to have been founded around the year 1200 in the vicinity of the St. Andrews church. During the course of the fourteenth century this community joined the Franciscan order.[19] It is not entirely clear whether the community of Maagdendries is to be identified with 'the beguines in the vicinity of the St. Andrews church' mentioned in a document dated to 1264.[20] Toward the end of the fifteenth century the tertiary convent experienced a golden age, which led, among other things, to the production of a significant number of manuscripts. Fifteen manuscripts from this convent survive today, all of which date to ca. 1500 and are attributed to the scribe Katrin van Rade and two anonymous nuns. Manuscript 70 E 5 is by far and away the oldest manuscript that can be counted among those to have resided in the collections at Maagdendries.[21]

A milestone in the study of the *Limburg sermons* is the comprehensive edition of manuscript 70 E 5 (not including the *Maastrichtse passiespel*)

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[17] Cf. Flament 1888–1889, 17ev. The same kind of label is attached to ms. The Hague, KB, 70 E 13 (cf. Hermans 1987, no. 394), in the same hand, with the text 'Maagdendries N° 4.' That the labels were affixed at the same time as the inventory was drawn up appears from the presence of a similar label in ms. The Hague, KB, 78 A 30 (cf. Hermans 1987, no. 363), with the inscription 'Slavanten N° 8.'

[18] Most recently in Stooker & Verbeij 1997, no. 897 (pp. 299–300).

[19] Little is known about the history of Maagdendries; cf. Von Geusau 1894, 44–45 (its location is given in fig. no. 4), Flament 1906, 58–59, Schoengen 1940, 140.

[20] Concerning the Beguines of St. Andrews in Maastricht see the repertory of beguinages in the Netherlands by Simons 2001, no. 66B (258 and 288). Simons 2000, 172 linked the convent of Maagdendries with the beguine community in Maastricht, but later had reservations about this identification (Simons 2004, 100–101). The link established by Simons between the Beguines St. Andrews/Maagdendries and the *LS* is therefore now doubtful.

[21] On the mss. of Maagdendries see Stooker & Verbeij 1997, vol. 1, p. 159 and vol. 2, nos. 891–905.

produced by J.H. Kern, son of H. Kern, who had previously worked with these very sermons. It is clear from the younger Kern's dissertation what his intentions were, namely the production of a phonology of the medieval Limburg dialect. In his view the *Limburg sermons* were one of the main sources for such a project.[22] The definitive edition of 1895, too, is prefaced by an exhaustive introduction to the language of the *Limburg sermons* according to manuscript H.[23] Kern localises the dialect, with the requisite caution, in the south of Limburg, in the vicinity of Tongeren or Maastricht. That Kern's edition is still so very useful is doubtless to be attributed to his predominately linguistic interests.[24] While many other nineteenth-century philologists engaged in extreme forms of textual criticism, Kern stuck to the diplomatic principle, thus bequeathing us a fully trustworthy representation of the manuscript's contents.

Kern's main interest was not in the literary backgrounds of the *Limburg sermons*, but he did his best to place manuscript H accurately. He knew the work by Wackernagel and Rieger and therefore was aware of the Middle High German origins of the *Limburg sermons.* Kern was able to further demonstrate that the Middle Dutch texts were translations of German originals and that a common Latin source could all but be discounted. He therefore assumed that the sixteen *Limburg sermons* that do not belong to the *St. Georgen sermons*-tradition must also be of Middle High German origin.[25]

It is a happy coincidence that Kern chose the oldest manuscript containing the *Limburg sermons* as the exemplar for his edition. He was, after all, interested in its language, and not its literary contents. Kern dated manuscript H to the end of the fourteenth century ('perhaps even to the beginning of the 15th century').[26] Though he nowhere offers justification for this dating, it was generally accepted in Dutch studies—despite the fact that the father, H. Kern, was a proponent of a date between 1300–1350.[27] The Middle High German collection of texts that formed the ultimate source of the *Limburg sermons* were,

[22] Kern 1891.
[23] Kern 1895.
[24] That usefulness has only increased since Kern's edition was made available in a digital version on the *CD-ROM Middelnederlands. Woordenboek en teksten*. The Hague-Antwerp 1998.
[25] Kern 1895, 3–11.
[26] Kern 1895, 1–2 and 171.
[27] H. Kern 1879, 25.

in his opinion, to be dated to ca. 1300. The text of Rd. 56 contains important support for such a dating; what appears below is the text as found in manuscript G:

> Die engil sehent in ze allen ziten gelusteclich vnde girliche an. Dar an mvgen wir wol merken dc das ein wünnecliches lieht mvoz sin, dc man ze allen ziten girlich ane siht, mit vroiden ane vrdruz, vnd hant si doch wol drivzehen hvndirt iar sin schone menscheit an gesehen, vnd sehent in noch alse girlich an alse der ersten stvnde do er ein gast da was.[28]
>
> [The angels eagerly and joyfully are watching him (= Christ) at all times. By this we may well realize that this light must be a wonderful light that one watches eagerly at all times, joyfully without boredom, and they have been watching his fair humanity now for thirteen hundred years and are still watching him as eagerly as in the first hour, when he appeared there as a guest.]

Wackernagel linked this chronological reference to the birth of Christ and it was this that he used to base his dating of the *St. Georgen sermons* to the later thirteenth century. His student Rieger, on the other hand, posited that Christ could only join the angels after His death, which would put the date of the German collection of texts at 1333. Kern, however, maintains that this passage may indeed be a reference to the birth of Jesus, which would also render a dating near the end of the thirteenth century possible.[29] The passage in question appears in the *Limburg sermons* in virtually identical form, namely in Ls. 15: *walna derteen hondert jaer* [after nearly thirteen-hundred years].[30] Kern drew no conclusions from this with regard to the dating of the Middle Dutch translation, for he dated that to 1320–1350.[31]

Concerning the origin of manuscript H Kern the younger is utterly silent, which is remarkable given the thoroughness characterizing the rest of his work. Did he not notice the Maagdendries label? Following Wackernagel and Rieger, Kern notes that the texts in manuscript H

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[28] Cited after Kern 1895, 8. Rieder's edition, of ms. A, reads at this point: *'Die engil sehent in ze allen ziten gelustklich und girlichen an.' Dar an mugent wir wol merken daz daz ain wunnekliches lieht můz sin daz man ze allen ziten girlich ane siht mit vróden ân urdrutz, und hant ez ietzont doch me denn drúhzehen hundert jar und drú jar sin schónnen mentschait an gesehen, und sehent si noch alz girlich an alz dez ersten tages* (Rieder 1908, 239,2–6. NB: the addition *und drú jar* rests, according to Seidel 2003, 16 upon a transcription error by Albrecht der Kolbe).

[29] Kern 1895, 8–9.

[30] Kern 1895, 353,1–4.

[31] Kern 1895, 171.

are aimed at an audience of monks, whereas the thirteenth-century manuscript G is unequivocally intended for nuns.[32] It will be clear that Kern's assertion is difficult to reconcile with a provenance of Maagdendries, inhabited as it was by female beguines or tertiaries. It may be that Kern refrained from mentioning Maagdendries because he realised that a convent could never have been the original owner of the *Limburg sermons* contained in manuscript H.

Round about the beginning of the twentieth century the realisation gradually began to dawn that the Southern Netherlands had given rise to an exceptionally rich spiritual literature in the vernacular. It was especially the first members of the *Ruusbroecgenootschap* [Ruusbroec Society]—founded in 1927 following extended preparations—in particular Desiderius A. Stracke, Jozef van Mierlo and Leonce Reypens, who did much of the pioneering work[33] The works of Hadewijch were in this period published for the first time, and already their editor, J. Vercoullie, was able to establish an important link to the *Limburg sermons* in manuscript H. A good portion of Hadewijch's tenth letter appeared to match the text in the second part of Ls. 41, *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne* (This teaches us nine kinds of love; see § 2.7).[34] As would later become known, there are further brief passages in the Letters of Hadewijch that run parallel to portions of the *Limburg sermons*. In the course of the 1920s, Reypens identified the then-anonymous treatise *Van seven manieren van minne* [The seven kinds of love] as having been authored by Beatrice van Nazareth (†1268). He did not fail to notice that this text appears in manuscript H as Ls. 42, but because H had been dated to the late fourteenth century, this witness to its textual transmission did not receive the attention it deserved. It was gradually realised that the *Limburg sermons* collection was based on Middle High German sources, but that the corpus was also an important representative of an indigenous, predominantly Brabantine mystic tradition. How to account for the posited Limburg dialect in manuscript H on the one hand, and the partially Brabantine contents on the other, became an important issue in research pertaining to the *Limburg sermons*.[35]

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[32] Kern 1895, 9–10; cf. Wackernagel & Rieger 1964, 385.

[33] The history of the Ruusbroecgenootschap appears in De Borchgrave 2001; cf. Willaert 1994, 2–15.

[34] Vercoullie 1905, XVIII.

[35] Cf. Slijpen 1937.

In 1935 Van Mierlo initiated a bold attempt to establish a place for the *Limburg sermons* in Middle Dutch literature of the thirteenth century by attributing them to Willem van Affligem.[36] In the *Catalogus virorum illustrium*, a southern Netherlands catalogue of authors dating to the fourteenth century, there is one mention of an author of a medieval work, namely in chapter 57:

> Frater Willelmvs monachus Haffigeniensis et ibidem aliquando prior uitam domine Lutgardis a fratre Thoma Latine scriptam conuertit in Theutonicum ritmice duobus sibi semper ritmis consonantibus. Dictauit etiam Latine quandam materiam satis eleganter de quadam moniali Cisterciensis ordinis que Theutonice multa satis mirabilia scripserat de se ipsa.[37]
>
> [Brother Willem, a monk from Affligem who there once served as prior, translated into *Diets* the true life of Dame Lutgart, which had been written in Latin by brother Thomas [of Cantimpré], and cast in rhythmic poetic form in rhyming couplets. Furthermore he described in an exceedingly refined manner in Latin a matter concerning a certain nun in the Cistercian order who had recorded many marvellous things about herself in *Diets*.]

Van Mierlo identified this author as Willem Berthout van Mechelen, who had indeed been a monk at Affligem, but who ended his career as abbot of the Benedictine abbey of Sint-Truiden (1277–†1279).[38] According to Van Mierlo (and several others), the translation of the *Vita Lutgardi* by Thomas of Cantimpré was to be found in a manuscript from the late thirteenth century (Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Ny kongelige samling 168), which contained the splendidly composed *Leven van Lutgart* [Life of Lutgart].[39] Based on stylistic and dialectological grounds, another work was also attributed to Willem: the *Luikse Leven van Jezus* ('Liège Life of Jesus', at the time also referred to by two further titles, the *Limburgse Leven van Jezus* and the *Luikse diatessaron*), a gospel harmony in prose that garnered nearly the same level of praise as the *Leven van*

[36] The most important publications in this regard are Van Mierlo 1935a, Van Mierlo 1935b and Van Mierlo 1950; an overview of Van Mierlo's attributions to Willem van Affligem is to be found in Hendrix 1996–…, vol. 4, especially pp. 27–36. Of decisive importance for Van Mierlo's thinking were the findings of De Bruin 1935, vol. 1, pp. 155–158; on this cf. Hendrix 1996–…, vol. 4, pp. 21–27.

[37] Ed. Häring 1970, p. 95.

[38] His life story is included in the *Gesta abbatum Trudonensium*; ed. De Borman 1877, vol. 2, pp. 215–223 (a Dutch translation of this source appears in Lavigne 1986–1993).

[39] Ed. Van Veerdeghem 1899, *Corpus Gysseling*, vol. II–5 (dipl.) and Spaans & Jongen 1996 (partial, with modern Dutch translation).

Lutgart.[40] The thirteenth-century manuscript containing this diatessaron (Liège, Bibliothèque de l'Université, 437), bears a mark of ownership from the abbey of Sint-Truiden—which incidentally only goes back to the sixteenth century.[41] According to Van Mierlo, the Latin text listed as the second work in the *Catalogus* had to have been the *Vita Beatricis*. After all, this life was ultimately based on a text written by Beatrice of Nazareth herself, and had been transformed into a splendid *vita* by a skilful Latinist. Moreover, in the oldest manuscript of the *Vita Beatricis* (Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 4459–70) there appears on f. 66 a note that attributes this *vita* to the very same Willem.[42] Finally, the *Limburg sermons* were also attributed to this exceptional Middle Dutch author. The Benedictine bibliographer Johannes Trithemius (†1516) attributes *sermones non inutiles* to Willem van Affligem, abbott of Sint-Truiden. This attribution, together with the Limburg dialect of the *Limburg sermons*, provided in Van Mierlo's view sufficient justification for associating Willem with the oldest Middle Dutch sermons. To do this, however, the *Limburg sermons* had to be dated to the thirteenth century, whereas Kern maintained a date between 1320–1350 for their composition. Van Mierlo suspected that Kern wanted to situate the *Limburg sermons* in the same period as the *Luikse Leven van Jezus*, which in his opinion belonged in the early fourteenth century as well. Van Mierlo, on the other hand, wanted to take the phrase in Ls. 15, *walna derteen hondert jaer*, at face value and thus date the *Limburg sermons* to ca. 1300.[43]

However attractive this reconstruction of Willem van Affligem's authorship may be—according to Van Mierlo 'if not the most remarkable, then undoubtedly one of the most remarkable [figures] in the entire history of Middle Dutch literature'—it has not held up under

[40] Ed. De Bruin 1970a. The current state of scholarship regarding the *Luikse Leven van Jezus* is discussed in Den Hollander & Schmidt 1999, a special issue of *Queeste*. The text is the subject of an ongoing research project by Prof. A.A. den Hollander (VU Amsterdam).

[41] A description of ms. Liège, UB, 437 appears in *Handschriften* 1986, no. 15 (pp. 126–131); the most recent work on the dating is Kwakkel 1999b, pp. 171–172. The author of this description, J[an] D[eschamps], unreservedly assumes that the manuscript was compiled in Sint-Truiden in the thirteenth century, even though the only evidence for this is the sixteenth-century mark of ownership. None of the contributors to Den Hollander & Schmidt 1999 remarks upon this fact.

[42] *Hanc vitam conscripsit domnus willelmus the mechlinia monachus haffligensis quondam prior in wauria post abbas sancti trudonis* (ed. Reypens 1964, 13 n. 1). On the manuscript see § 1.5.

[43] Van Mierlo 1935b.

scrutiny.[44] Guido Hendrix exerted a great deal of effort in an attempt to deny Willem van Affligem the authorship of the Copenhagen *Lutgart*, only to conclude that we simply do not know who authored this splendidly composed life. Nor does Hendrix acknowledge any of the other possible attributions.[45] Erwin Mantingh quickly resolved the resultant stalemate, at least regarding the *Leven van Lutgart*, by proposing a new attribution: in his view the author of the *Catalogus virorum illustrium* is none other than the very Willem named in the *Catalogus monachorum*, a list of important monks from Affligem compiled by Beda Regaus (1714–1808). This Willem entered Affligem following a secular life in which he had also been active literarily. He later became prior of Frasnes, a priory associated with the monastery of Affligem. Willem, monk of Affligem and later prior of Frasnes, is now considered to be the author of the Copenhagen *Lutgart*.[46] The *Vita Beatricis* is currently attributed to an anonymous Cistercian engaged in pastoral work in the monastery of Beatrice, the Cistercian abbey Nazareth in Lier.[47] Because the presumed link between the Copenhagen *Leven van Lutgart* and the *Luikse Leven van Jezus* cannot upon closer scrutiny be sustained, Willem's authorship of the Liège diatessaron is also no longer valid.[48] The attribution of sermons to Willem van Affligem by Trithemius is also ultimately of doubtful value. The chronicle of Sint-Truiden states that under Willem's abbacy the monastery was a centre of knowledge and learning; at the time there lived there *plures honeste persone et literati viri, facundi in Teuthonico, Gallico et Latino sermone* [numerous famous and learned men, who were fluent in the Dutch, French and Latin languages].[49] It may well be that Trithemius (or his source) erroneously took the chronicle's *sermone* as a reference to abbot Willem's preaching activities. Ultimately it would appear that the presumed connection between the *Limburg sermons* on the one hand, and Willem van Affligem on the other, is no more than a far-reaching yet untenable hypothesis.

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[44] Van Mierlo 1950, 27.

[45] In fact, vol. 4 of Hendrix 1996–…, is devoted in its entirety to the issue of authorship.

[46] Mantingh 1998, especially pp. 167–171; for the implications, see also Mantingh 2000.

[47] Reypens 1964, 26*–38* and De Ganck 1991, vol. 1, xxii–xxv; cf. Faesen 1999b, 97 n. 2.

[48] Cf. Warnar 1999, pp. 117–118.

[49] Ed. De Borman 1877, vol. 2, p. 222.

The same fate awaited another theory concerning the place of origin of the *Limburg sermons* posited by P.C. Boeren. During work on his dissertation on the northern French prelate and preacher Guiard of Laon (†1248), Boeren discovered the Ls. 40 is a translation of a sermon by Guiard (see § 2.6). In a separate article on the discovery Boeren asserted that the *Limburg sermons* had a Franciscan background.[50] He combined the already superseded notion that the *St. Georgen sermons* were written by the Franciscan Berthold von Regensburg with the parallels to the *Vitis mystica* by the Franciscan theologist Bonaventure (†1274) that he (Boeren) thought he detected in the *Limburg sermons*. Manuscript H was supposed to provide supplementary evidence in the form of an extremely abbreviated Latin phrase on folio 1r, expanded by Boeren as follows: *Hic incipiunt sermones bonaventure fratris*.[51] The origin of this codex in the convent of Maagdendries, belonging to the third Franciscan order, completed the circle for Boeren. But nearly all of his arguments were later refuted, leaving us no choice but to abandon as well the idea of a Franciscan background for the *Limburg sermons*.[52]

Thanks to Kern's edition the *Limburg sermons* became well known in Netherlandic studies and they acquired a modest place in a number of the great Dutch literary histories and surveys. They did not, however, receive an excessive amount of appreciation. Despite his praise for their authors' 'allegorical ingenuity', G. Kalff did not consider them of significance for the history of Dutch literature.[53] J. te Winkel mentions the sermons as an example of edifying literature for nuns, behind which, moreover, despite the intermediary High German stage, he detected a Latin source.[54] Van Mierlo is fairly thorough in his treatment of the *Limburg sermons* in his literary history, in which he introduces the idea of Willem van Affligem's authorship. He was of the opinion that the collection was produced in the abbey of Sint-Truiden under Willem's abbacy.[55] In his history of Dutch devotion, Stephanus Axters pays by

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[50] Boeren 1953a, especially pp. 278–281.

[51] Boeren 1953a, 280.

[52] Ruh 1956, 49 unhesitatingly dismisses the connection with Bonaventure; Gumbert 1987, 169 transcribes the Latin abbreviation on f. 1 in H as follows: *hic incipiunt sermones bona.* (?) *si al<i>quis* (?) *velec* (?) *mine* (?) (crossed out); Maagdendries joined the third order only in the fourteenth century, whereas ms. H dates to the thirteenth century; nor can Maagdendries have been the first possessor of H. Cf. also Lüders 1958, 56 n. 1, Ampe 1958, 60 n. 3 and Seidel 2003, 69 and 247 n. 152.

[53] Kalff 1906, 371–374.

[54] Te Winkel 1922, 178–179.

[55] Van Mierlo 1949, 67–69.

far and away the greatest amount of attention to our collection of sermons.[56] He discusses the *Limburg sermons* in the context of the 'age of Ruusbroec', given the fact that in his view the Middle Dutch sermons are to be dated to 1330. Though he rejected Van Mierlo's arguments on this point, he did not want to let go of the notion that the *Limburg sermons* originated in Sint-Truiden. In the provisionally final great Dutch literary history, by G.P.M. Knuvelder, the *Limburg sermons* appear only as an example of High German influence on Dutch mysticism.[57] Kurt Ruh allotted them no space at all in his *Geschichte der abendländische Mystik*, where he nevertheless devoted a great deal of attention to the Dutch tradition.[58] In the new handbook of medieval literature from the Meuse-Rhine region, the *Limburg sermons* are treated in their own right as an early specimen of religious literature from this region.[59] And in his recent history of Dutch literature in the thirteenth century, Frits van Oostrom accords the *Limburg sermons* the place they deserve.[60]

During the 1970s, Kern's localisation of the *Limburg sermons* was attacked from the linguistic perspective by Wilhelmus Raeven.[61] Raeven regarded the title *Limburg sermons* a misnomer, though only because it is anachronistic to speak of a Limburg dialect in the Middle Ages. The contemporary provinces of Limburg in both Belgium and the Netherlands were created, after all, during the French period. Raeven would therefore prefer the term 'Maaslands' for the Germanic dialect spoken during the Middle Ages on both sides of the river Meuse (Maas), in the area now corresponding more or less to the present provinces of Limburg in Belgium and the Netherlands. Even more significant are Raeven's conclusions regarding the use of personal pronouns, the most widely research aspect of the Maasland dialects.[62] The scribe of

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[56] Axters 1950–1960, vol. 2, 138–149.

[57] Knuvelder 1982, 265; See also p. 176.

[58] Ruh 1990–1999. While various surveys appeared, work on the *LS* continued, in particular in the form of important detailed studies such as Lüders 1958, Lievens 1958 and Lievens 1964; See further e.g. Reynaert 1981, pp. 170–171 and 282, and Faesen 2000, 138–145. In the important study of the Middle Dutch sermon tradition, Zieleman 1978, the *LS* play only a marginal role in the footnotes. Most of these studies will receive more detailed attention later on in this book.

[59] Tervooren 2006, 69–71 (by K.O. Seidel).

[60] Van Oostrom 2006, 385–389. The findings of this provocative literary history could not be incorporated into this translation.

[61] Raeven 1979. His analysis jibes with the current consensus, as reported to me by Karina van Dalen-Oskam (Instituut voor Nederlandse Lexicologie, Leiden).

[62] Raeven was able to build on the work of Zelissen 1969 (in which the linguistic material from Kern 1895 is also touched upon from time to time).

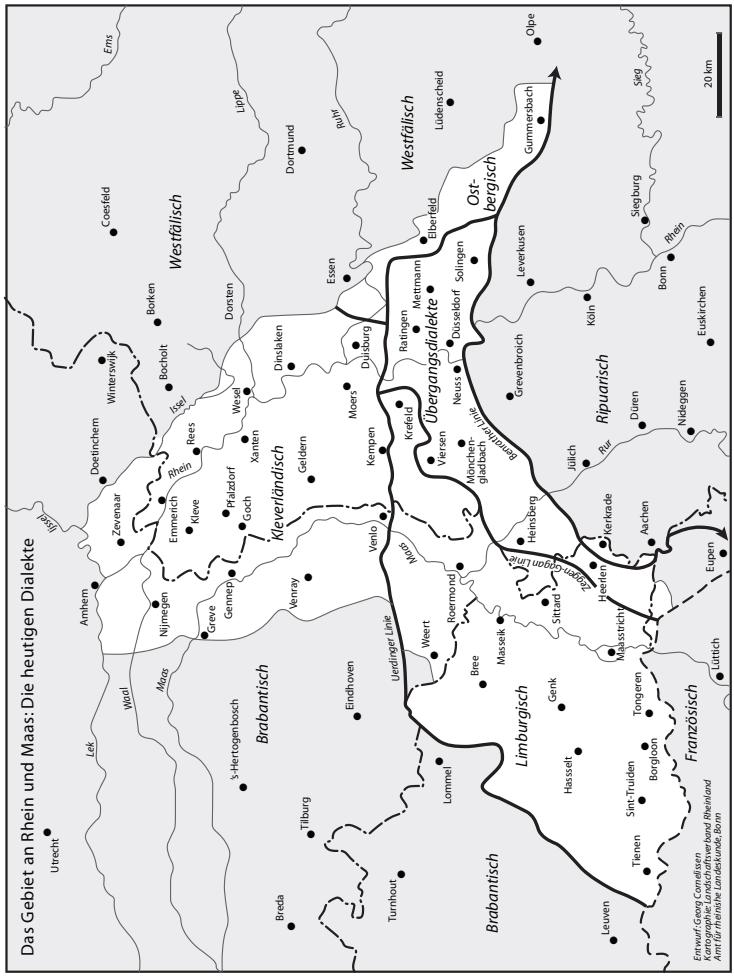

Fig. 2. The dialects of the Meuse-Rhine area (reproduced after Tervooren 2006, 329).

manuscript H uses very few pronominal forms typical of the Maasland dialect. According to Raeven he must therefore hail from the western part of the Maasland dialect area, where the Brabant dialect gradually won out. For example, manuscript H consistently employs the western form *ic; ich* only appears once, and that in a fourteenth-century correction.[63] This *ic/ich* isogloss, also referred to as the Ürdinger line, ran from the south-eastern-most part of the Middle Dutch language area, approximately from Venlo southwards, via Leuven to Tienen in eastern Brabant.[64] We must therefore situate the language of the *Limburg sermons*, or at least of the scribe of manuscript H, further to the east, probably in Brabant.

In the medieval period, the contemporary Dutch and German-speaking regions (including parts of Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and Austria) constituted a continuous, Germanic linguistic landscape. During the Middle Ages, people were very much aware of the distinction between the High and Low German areas, sometimes referred to as the *Oberlant* and the *Niderlant*, respectively. It should be noted in this respect that a number of other linguistic landscapes coexisted besides the *Niderlant* and the *Oberlant*, roughly speaking the Rhine-Frankish-Hessian, the Ripuarian (in the area surrounding Cologne), and the Mosel-Frankish (the area surrounding Trier).[65] Modern linguists have established the boundary between High German and Low German, especially Dutch, by means of the *maken-machen* isogloss (Benrath line). The area in which the *Limburg sermons* were composed lies at the intersection of such important linguistic boundaries. Moreover, immediately to the south of this lies the border between the Germanic and Romance dialects. Because of this, from a linguistic point of view this region formed an important transitional zone.[66]

It is only in recent decades that manuscript H has received serious attention as a material object. According to the Dutch codicologist and paleographer J.P. Gumbert, it was written by one of the 'most

[63] Cf. Kern 1895, 66 and Raeven 1979, 162. The correction is as follows: *dan oft ich dade* (?) *al wer*[*t*] *och goet* (f. 53c); cf. Kern 1895, 289 n. 6 and Gumbert 1987, 169.

[64] See the map in Crompvoets 1988, 104. Cf. also De Smet 1988, De Smet 1989 (where on p. 231 it is stated that the *ic/ich*-isogloss in this region is dated to the course of the thirteenth century) and Tervooren 2006, 332–334 (by G. Cornelissen).

[65] See Ruh 1948b, Williams-Krapp 1986 and Williams-Krapp 2003. We will discuss the *Oberlant* and the *Niderlant* in greater depth at § 4.6.

[66] For more, see Tervooren 2005, (by G. Cornelissen), 315–340.

splendid and expressive hands' he had ever seen. In the *festschrift* for Jan Deschamps, published in 1987, Gumbert revealed a sensational new dating of manuscript 70 E 5, based for the most part on the script.[67] In his monumental catalogue of Middle Dutch manuscripts, Deschamps had dated the codex to the end of the fourteenth century, agreeing more or less with J.H. Kern's view.[68] Gumbert, however, demonstrates convincingly that the script and pen-work of manuscript H belong to about 1300. It bears pointing out that the codicologists W. de Vreese en G.I. Lieftinck had earlier arrived at a comparable dating.[69] Gumbert decided upon a cautious dating of the manuscript to 'around 1300', but reveals in the 'Zusammenfassung' of his article that he would prefer to place the codex in the thirteenth century: 'Eine Untersuchung der Schrift […] zeigt jedoch, daß die Handschrift 'etwa 1270–1290', oder etwas vorsichtiger formuliert, um 1300 datiert worden muß' ['An examination of the script…reveals nevertheless that the manuscript should be dated 'somewhere between 1270–1290, or, more cautiously put, around 1300'].[70]

> Gumbert's article should have had consequences for the research that went into the *Vroegmiddelnederlands woordenboek* (*VMNW; Dictionary of Early Dutch*), completed in 2001. This dictionary is based on the *Corpus van Middelnederlandse teksten (tot en met jaar 1300)*, the life's work of the Flemish linguist Maurits Gysseling. The *Corpus Gysseling* was completed in the year that Gumbert announced his redating of manuscript H. The *Limburg sermons* were therefore not included in this collection of materials. That the manuscript from The Hague containing the *Boec der minnen* also dates from the thirteenth century (see § 1.4) went equally unnoticed by Gijsseling and his cohorts. Early religious prose is therefore almost entirely absent from the *Vroegmiddelnederlands woordenboek*; only the *Luikse Leven van Jezus* has been incorporated into it.

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[67] Gumbert 1987. A thorough manuscript description is wanting, however, in Gumbert's study; for this now see Appendix I in this book.

[68] Deschamps 1972, no. 93 (pp. 256–259); cf. Deschamps 1954, no. 60 (p. 44).

[69] De Vreese 1962b, 145: 'Uit het begin der 14de eeuw zouden verder reeds een aantal handschriften te noemen zijn, in de eerste plaats de zogenaamde *Limburgsche Sermoenen* […]' (It would be possible to name a number of other manuscripts from the beginning of the fourteenth century, especially the so-called *Limburg sermons* […]'). Lieftinck's dating was less widely accessible: in the margins of his personal copy of the *Bouwstoffen* for the *Middelnederlandsch woordenboek* he wrote 's. XIII^{ex}' next to ms. 70 E 5 (cf. Gumbert 1987, 179).

[70] Gumbert 1987, 181; cf. Kienhorst 1999, 55. In an addendum Gumbert 1987, 179–181 points moreover to ms. Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. Z. 67 (= 1982), which is reputedly by the same hand as manuscript H. This scribe identified himself as *R.D. Capella*! In an oral communication J.P. Gumbert has informed me that he regards this identification as of little value, so I have not pursued this possible connection.

The pen-work and style of illumination of The Hague manuscript also provide indications for such an early dating.[71] Gumbert points to the Copenhagen manuscript containing the *Leven van Lutgart* , dated to ca. 1270, as the most significant parallel to the splendid initials in manuscript H.[72] The style of the only initial in manuscript H, on f. 3r (fig. 3), is particularly reminiscent of a group of Latin Psalters produced in the bishopric of Liège in the thirteenth to early fourteenth century, and which have always been associated with the beguines (see § 4.4). Judith Oliver, the foremost expert on these Psalters, dates the miniature from H on stylistic grounds to the period 1280–1310.[73] She associates H with a group of manuscripts that are thought to have been produced in the Limburg-Brabant region around 1300. Besides a few Liège Psalters, it would have included a manuscript of Jacob van Maerlant's *Rijmbijbel* (Rhyme Bible).[74] Also attributed to this group is a thirteenth to early fourteenth-century illuminated Latin manuscript containing homilies by the church fathers for the gospel reading for Sundays, which originated at the chapter of St Servaas in Maastricht.[75] While a focused art historical analysis of H remains a desideratum, these observations confirm, at least, the early dating of the manuscript. The style of illumination appears moreover to point in the direction of the region Limburg-Brabant.

A stylistic peculiarity in H are the five-petaled red and blue flowers that appear now and again as marginal decorations, especially in the early folios (f. 3r and 6v; see fig. 3).[76] They look almost like stamps. Ms. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 78 A 31, with the *Vitae sanctorum*, contains similar flowers in great numbers (f. 15v, 20r, 23v, 25v, 26v, 33r, 38v, 39v, 41r, 44v, etc.) and appears to be related stylistically to H (fig. 4). This gigantic codex dates to the end of the thirteenth century and was produced at the St Servaas chapter in Maastricht. Like the above-mentioned

[71] Illustrations of illuminated pages from manuscript H may be found in Gumbert 1987, 170 and Oliver 1988, vol. 2, fig. 205.

[72] Gumbert 1987, 177–178.

[73] Cf. Oliver 1988, vol. 1, 195 and vol. 2, fig. 205.

[74] Oliver 1988, pp. 194–199. The most recent study of the Brussels *Rijmbijbel* (ms. Brussels, KB, 15.001) is Meuwese 2001, pp. 33–78; she situates its illumination in East Flanders or Brabant (pp. 77–78) and finds little stylistic affinity between it and manuscript H (pp. 75–76).

[75] Oliver 1994, 255: it concerns ms. Utrecht, UB, 128 (3 G 3), the contents of which consist of *Homiliae SS Patrum in Evangelice, accedunt lectiones in quibusdam festis* (See Van der Horst 1989, 38 (nr. 137) and figs. 599–600) and Hermans 1987, 126 (nr. 353)).

[76] Erik Kwakkel (Vancouver) was the first to notice this; he called attention to a number of manuscripts containing these flowers.

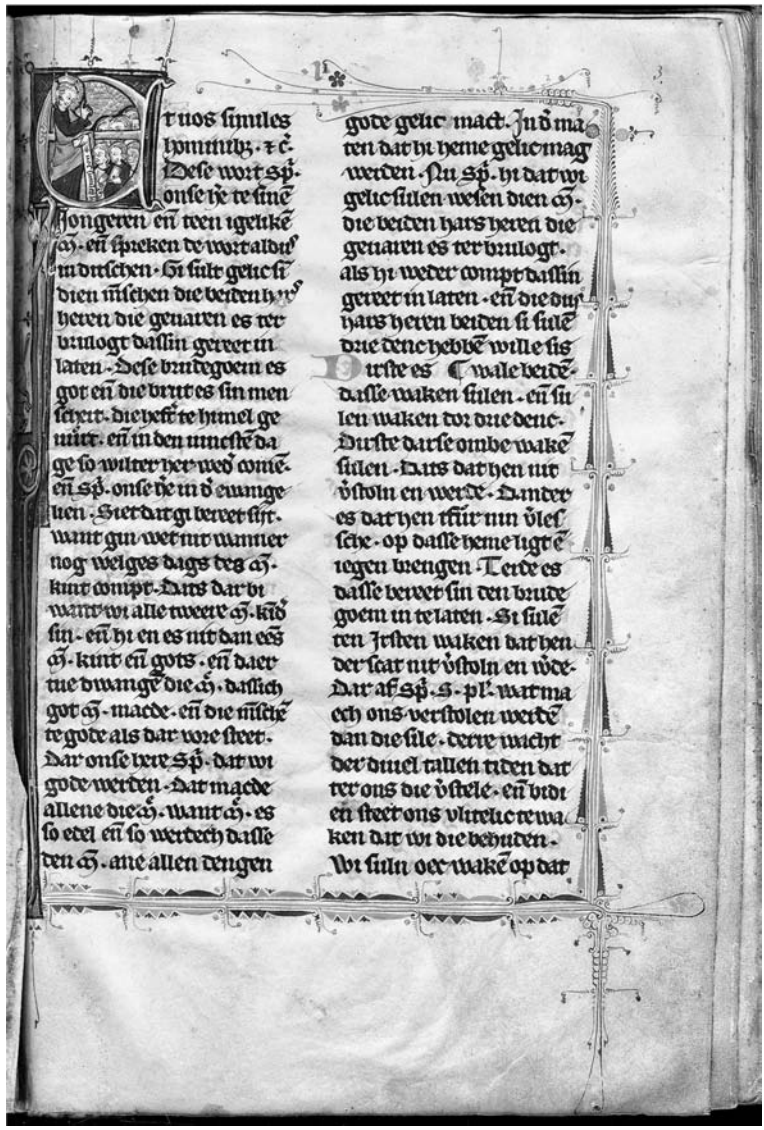

Fig. 3. MS The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 70 E 5, f. 3r. Opening miniature of the *Limburg sermons*, with five-petaled flowers in red and blue.

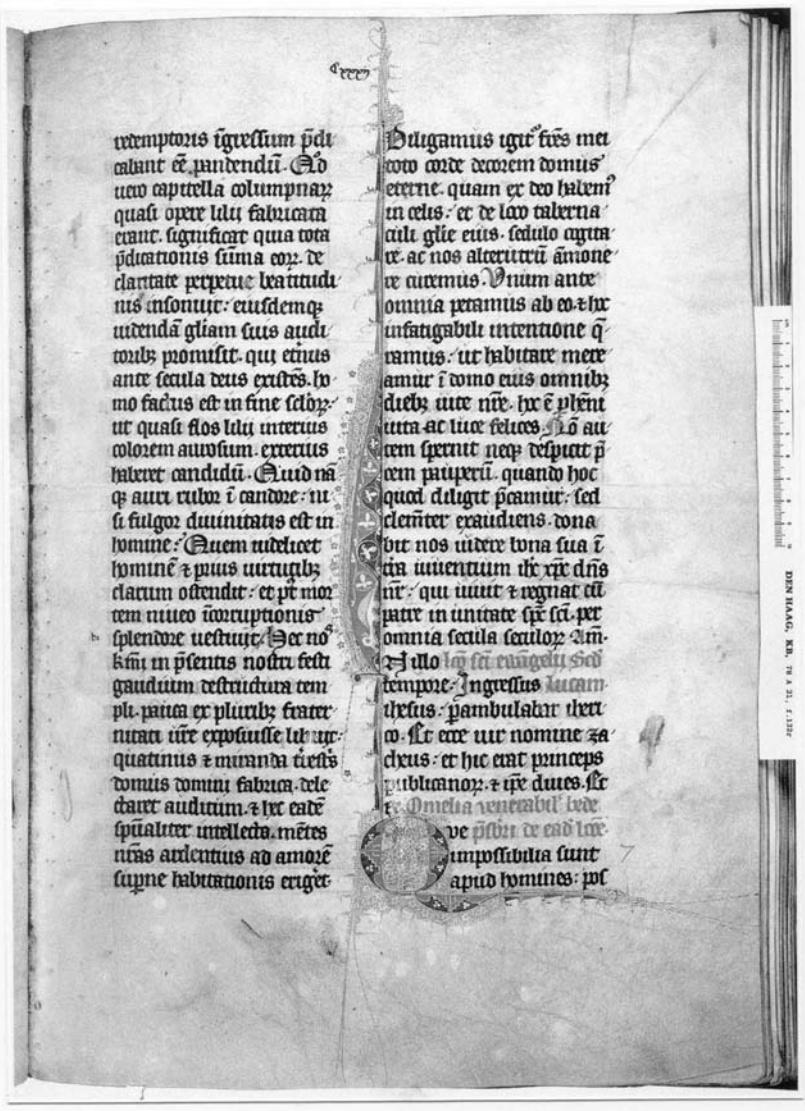

Fig. 4. MS The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 78 A 31, f. 132r. Leaf from a *Vitae sanctorum*, from the St. Servaas chapter at Maastricht (13th century).

manuscript of homilies from St Servaas, this book was contained in the notorious eleven chests.[77] Similar flowers have been found in a number of other manuscripts dating to ca. 1300. In ms. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, KA XXIV (ca. 1325; Brabant), we find on f. 77v (where the text *Dit es de frenesie* begins) a number of blue ones.[78] Ms. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. s.n. 12.862 (first quarter of the fourteenth century) exhibits two (f. 47r and 59r). This codex, which contains Bonaventure's *Lignum vitae*, later lay at Rooklooster, but belonged originally to the private collection of a number of canons from Cambrai (Kamerijk).[79] It is too early to base conclusions on these observations, but it is striking that the red and blue flowers appear in the region of Maastricht at a remarkably early date.

Gumbert's palaeographical observations also had far-reaching consequences for the *Maastrichtse passiespel*: its script appears to date to ca. 1330, whereas previously it had always been dated to the end of the fourteenth century.[80] Because of this redating, the *Maastrichtse passiespel* is now one of the earliest representatives of the genre, which is otherwise almost entirely concentrated in the German language region. It had always been assumed that this dramatic text had an independent origin and that it was added only later to H as a separate entity. A significant piece of evidence pointing in that direction is the play's Ripuarian dialect, which does deviate rather starkly from that of the *Limburg sermons*. Gumbert, however, notes that the first gathering of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* was prepared in the very same fashion as the folios upon which the *Limburg sermons* were written.[81] This gives rise to the suspicion that there exists a connection between the *Limburg sermons* and the *Maastrichtse passiespel* in manuscript H, even though the nature of that connection is anything but clear (see § 2.14).

According to Judith Oliver, the pen-work of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* (fig. 16) shows affinity with that of a number of manuscripts produced in Liège or its immediate environs between 1310–1334: ms. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, IV 1045, a Benedictine missal from Saint-Jacques in Liège, dated to ca. 1310–1320, and two liturgical manuscripts from the Liège

[77] Hermans 1987, 126; ms. 78 A 31 bore no. 350 on the Maastricht list. According to a note by G.I. Lieftinck in the BNM, a second part containing the *Vitae sanctorum* from the Servaas chapter supposedly resides in the Rijksarchief at Maastricht but one looks in vain for it in the catalogue by Jägers 1991.

[78] See the color illustration in Hogenelst & Van Oostrom 1995, 45.

[79] On the ms. see Pächt, Jenni & Thoss 1983, vol. 1, 109–110 and vol. 2, fig. 10.

[80] Gumbert 1987, 169–173.

[81] Gumbert 1987, 169.

chapter of Sainte-Croix (now in the Musée d'Art Religieux and d'Art Mosan, in Liège) dating to 1320–1334.[82]

On the flyleaf of manuscript 70 E 5 there appear a few notes or pen trials, one of which is of particular interest: *Item ich byn schuldich Johan van Bynen ind Johan van Buten X maldere* (?) *cluren* [Item I owe Johan van Bynen and Johan van Buten x *maldere cluren*].[83] According to Gumbert, the cursive hand of this note dates to the fourteenth century. That the scribe writes *ich* instead of *ic* indicates that he lived to the east of the Ürdinger line, just like the fourteenth-century scribe of the *Maastrichtse passiespel*. Dialectal indicators lead one to conclude that manuscript H was further west in its first phase of production (the *Limburg sermons*) than in its second (*Maastrichtse passiespel*, a number of corrections, annotations on the flyleaf). A strikingly similar notation appears in a fourteenth-century manuscript containing Jacob van Maerlant's *Alexanders geesten*: *Johan van Bynnen is schuldich Johan Buten III malder* [Johan van Bynnen owes Johan Buten III *malder*].[84] This codex dates to ca the middle of the fourteenth century and based on the dialect is situated in the region between Kleve (Cleves) and Gulik (now Jülich in Germany).[85]

The striking similarity in phrasing may not, in the end, be as significant as it first appears. The annotation in the *Alexanders geesten* manuscript appears in the middle of a long list of *probationes pennae*, many of which are legal in nature (records of debt, promissory notes). It may well be that the notes concerning 'Johan van Binnen' [John of the Inside] and 'Johan van Buten' [John of the Outside] should rather be read as jokes by the scribes, written while testing their newly sharpened quills.

Thanks to Gumbert's thorough palaeographical research, we finally have an accurate assessment of the manuscript's advanced age, and of its spiritual contents, as well. But many uncertainties regarding the codex remain. Raeven's linguistic analysis demonstrates that the scribe of H is to be situated somewhere in the transitional zone between Brabant and Maaslands, which calls into question the established title

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[82] Cf. Oliver 1994, 255 n. 54; for the Saint Jacques Missal see Oliver 1988, vol. 1, 200–202 and vol. 2, fig. 208 and *In beeld geprezen* 1988, no. 39 (pp. 134–136), for the gradual and the antiphonary of Sainte-Croix see *In beeld geprezen* 1988, no. 41 (pp. 140–142) and no. 42 (pp. 143–147), respectively, and Oliver 1995.

[83] Gumbert 1987, 169.

[84] Gumbert 1987, 169 n. 12; the note is found on f. 108v.

[85] Ms. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 41; see Deschamps 1972, no. 6b. Deschamps dates the ms. to ca. 1400, but in the BNM Willem de Vreese holds fast to a dating of ca. 1360. Cf. Coun 1988, 77 and 82.

for our collection, *Limburg sermons*. In the interest of continuity, however, we persist in using the term *Limburg sermons*. Judging by linguistic features in the *Maastrichtse passiespel* and a number of later corrections in the manuscript, H appears to have migrated west in the course of the fourteenth century, perhaps into the Ripuarian language area. Who might have been the original owners of the manuscript remains unclear, nor do we know who its Ripuarian owner might have been. In the eighteenth century H lay at Maagdendries in Maastricht, but the convent cannot have been the original owner of the manuscript because the *Limburg sermons* contained therein were aimed at an audience of brothers (see Appendix IV). Given the fact that the Middle High German *St. Georgen sermons* were written for nuns, the Middle Dutch text in this manuscript must have been an intentional adaptation for the new target audience.

If we are to identify the primary audience for the *Limburg sermons*, we should look for a male community with high religious aspirations, the members of whom were presumably not able to read Latin. And because certainly in the thirteenth century we may assume that every monk did possess this skill, we should probably not look in monastic circles. The first to come to mind for the southern Netherlands are the Beghards, who were both numerous and appeared very early in the region. Beghards formed spiritual communities who lived without any official rule. They were self-sufficient, usually by means of textile production.[86] In the area where H is to be situated on linguistic grounds, a number of Beghard communities had been established in several cities since the middle of the thirteenth century, among others in Diest, Sint-Truiden, Brussels, Tienen, Mechelen, Leuven and Aarschot (I mention here only cities that lie west of the Ürdinger line).[87] Given the apparently Maastricht antecedents of manuscript H, the Beghard house of St Bartholomew in that city also bears mentioning. This community sprang from a group of textile weavers that was already established at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The community adopted the third rule of St Francis before 1268, but despite this the inhabitants of St Bartholomew were referred to as 'Beghards' well into the fifteenth

[86] The history of the Beghards has yet to be written. An overview of the situation in the southern Netherlands is offered by McDonnell 1954, pp. 246–265.

[87] Cf. McDonnell 1954, pp. 253–255. Most of these Beghard houses joined the Third Order of Francis during the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; in the fifteenth century most of these houses joined the Chapter of Zepperen, founded in 1434 (see Van Heel 1953 for information on the Beghard houses that belonged to this Chapter).

century.[88] But other male communities besides the Beghards could have been the first owners of manuscript H and its *Limburg sermons*.[89]

In the absence of concrete evidence, we are forced to do no more than speculate about the origin of manuscript H. What we do have, however, are the contents of the manuscript, consisting of forty-eight *Limburg sermons* (and the *Maastrichtse passiespel*). The early dating of manuscript H has far-reaching consequences for our understanding of Middle Dutch religious literature. Thirteenth-century manuscripts containing Middle Dutch texts are in and of themselves uncommon, but a manuscript containing prose from this era is a true rarity. Only three others are known: the *Nederrijns moraalboek*, the manuscript containing the *Luikse Leven van Jezus*, and the manuscript from The Hague containing the *Boec der minnen* (both these texts and their manuscripts are discussed in detail below). The unknown compiler of the *Limburg sermons* was thus at the basis of an important innovation in Dutch literature, and not only in his use of prose. He was also the first, at least as far as we know, to compile a large collection of Middle Dutch religious prose. Because sermons constitute such an important element in this compilation, we offer here a brief overview of the history of the genre.

1.2 *The Medieval Sermon*

During the Middle Ages, the sermon was one of the most widely practiced literary genres. In all manner of situations there was great appreciation for an edifying speech by a priest, a gifted speaker, an established expert, or any combination thereof. It became more and more usual for the masters of the cathedral schools and the nascent universities and for the canons of the chapters to preach in public

[88] For more on the Beghards of St. Bartholomew see Von Geusau 1894, pp. 41–43 (for its location, see fig. no. 10); Flament 1906, 38; Doppler 1927; Schoengen 1940, pp. 139–140; De Kok 1942, pp. 108–109, Van Heel 1953, pp. 97–103, McDonnell 1954, 255 n. 67.

[89] A prominent male community in the region was the Commandery of the Teutonic Order in Biezen, which enjoyed some fame as a centre for the production of Middle Dutch literature. Leaves from the early thirteenth-century Limburger *Aiol* were used as covers for works written at Biezen but, as Coun 1995a has demonstrated, there is no reason to assume a connection between the Commandery and the *Aiol*. The militant monk-knights do not constitute the best imaginable audience for the *Limburg sermons*, with their mystical-ascetic contents (on the spirituality of the Teutonic Order, see Elm 1993, for their connection to vernacular literature, see Potkowski 1993).

before a critical audience of secular canons, clerics or students. It was especially the mendicant orders, in particular the Franciscans and the Dominicans, who developed the vernacular sermon into a powerful tool for educating and edifying the mostly illiterate lay masses. But the sermon gained ground in the enclosed world of the monasteries, as well, not least because of the impressive growth in numbers of nuns and other female religious. Not only were these sisters preached to on numerous occasions, but an entirely new corpus of literature was created for them in the vernacular, for during this era women normally did not have much, if any, knowledge of Latin. Sermons constituted an essential element of this new religious literature. In the brief overview that follows, the emphasis will fall in particular on the monastic and vernacular sermon traditions.[90]

In the life of the monastery, the original environment of the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons*, the sermon occupied a prominent place in the daily routine. The Rule of Benedict of Nursia (†547) prescribes that during the nocturnes of matins there were to be readings from homiletic literature, that is to say from the sermons of Church Fathers such as Augustine, Gregory the Great, or John Chrysostom. But when the occasion arose, the abbot (or as the case might be, the abbess) or some other qualified brother might preach. In some monasteries a sermon was delivered as often as twice a day. In contrast to the sermon delivered to a lay audience, the chief concern within this professional context was not the preaching of the faith or simple text exegesis. The contemplative life of monks and nuns requires that they abandon the world and devote themselves to the divine. Sermons could assist them in directing their thoughts toward God by providing fresh inspiration for their personal devotions. Furthermore, as a genre the sermon was ideally suited for the continual renewal of the expression and confirmation of both common monastic ideals and the specific spiritual identity of the local monastic community.

The study of the medieval sermon is accompanied by a number of particular problems, some of them bordering on the paradoxical. Because the genre has so many different manifestations and surviving forms, it is to begin with difficult to formulate a clear definition for it.

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[90] The standard work on the medieval sermon is currently Kienzle 2000a; in this collection, Ferzoco & Muessig 2000 constitutes an exhaustive bibliography on the subject. More succinct overviews of the medieval sermon are provided by e.g. Roberts 1988, Kienzle 1993, *LexMA* VII, pp. 171–183 and Muessig 2002.

The recently published standard work on the medieval sermon as historical source, *The Sermon*, employs the following, very broad definition: 'The sermon is essentially an oral discourse, spoken in the voice of the preacher who addresses an audience, to instruct and exhort them, on a topic concerned with faith and morals and based on a sacred text'.[91] It goes without saying that a genre as broadly defined as this can be divided into classifications and subtypes.[92] To cite just one of the most frequently used classifications, many specialists are of the opinion that several modes of sermon may be distinguished, among which the *homilia* and *sermo* are the most important. The *homilia* or homily represents the more ancient form, rooted in the era of the Church Fathers, in which the pericope (the liturgical reading of the day) is cursorily read and explained. The younger *sermo* or sermon form is less firmly tied to the liturgy and is, from a literary and rhetorical point of view, much more elaborate. In this form, too, the point of departure is a scriptural text or a phrase from the liturgy, but in most cases only a few ideas are taken from this, which act as the springboard for an argument that may easily diverge from the literal scriptural text. In this *modus*, the preacher could demonstrate his expertise as theologian and rhetorician. To this end he could avail himself of several *artes praedicandi*.[93] Some note that making a distinction between *homilia* and *sermo* makes little sense, because in the Middle Ages both preaching styles exist side by side in numerous hybrid permutations.[94]

Another basic problem is that there exists a natural tension within the sermon genre between orality and the written word.[95] The sermon is in essence an oral genre, the text of which ceases to exist the moment it is pronounced. Only when someone takes the trouble to record a sermon, be it the preacher himself, or one or more of his listeners—who, by the way, may have very disparate reasons for doing so—are the contents of such a sermon preserved for posterity. But the written record of a sermon belongs to a different genre than the speech from the pulpit it purports to record. In whatever form a sermon may be recorded, when it is written down it becomes a text bound by rhetorical rules

[91] Kienzle 2000b, p. 151.

[92] Cf. e.g. the typologies of the Dutch and German sermons, respectively, drawn up by Zieleman 1982 and Valente Bacci 1993.

[93] For more on the medieval *artes praedicandi*, see Briscoe 1992.

[94] Cf. Kienzle 2000b, 161–166.

[95] The question of orality vs. literacy is one of the main themes of Kienzle 2000a (see, among others, Kienzle 2000c, pp. 291–295 and Kienzle 2000d, pp. 965–967).

that do not apply to oral discourse. The original, orally delivered texts no longer exist. Everything that we now know about the medieval sermon is based on thousands of written texts, which reflect a rich and multifarious tradition of preaching. Concerning most of these sermons it cannot even be determined with any degree of certainty that they were ever in fact delivered orally. Nevertheless they constitute our only entrance into the medieval preaching tradition.[96]

This state of affairs poses numerous problems for the sermon scholar, not least of which when he or she wishes to establish whether a given text even belongs to the genre. Many definitions of the genre have been developed. The following blueprint of a (written) medieval monastic sermon combines the notion from the *artes praedicandi* that a sermon should consist of three parts, in which certain predetermined elements should always be present, with a number of features from the tradition of the Latin monastic sermon, upon which the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* are incontrovertibly based:[97]

I Introduction
  1. Inscription
  2. Theme or pericope (also *lectio*): usually from the Bible, but sometimes also from the liturgy
  (3. Protheme: at this point in the sermon the preacher may add a prayer requesting strength or a humility topos)

II Body/Corpus
  1. *Divisio*: the way in which the material from the pericope is divided
  2. *Dilatatio*: the sermon proper, in which a given subject is developed with the aid of scriptural and other sources. Disparate methods may be employed, separately or in combination: interpretation according to one or more exegeses, references to other biblical passages (often based on word associations), references to the monastic life, citation of other sources (exempla, bestiaries, Saints' Lives, etc.). Each individual point is followed

[96] Cf. Kienzle 2000b, pp. 159–160. The pioneer of research into the Middle Dutch sermon, G.C. Zieleman, distinguishes emphatically between oral preaching and the written sermon, whereby he emphasises that we can know next to nothing about oral preaching. (Zieleman 1978 and Zieleman 1993).

[97] I base my comments here on Mertens (in press b), who takes the *artes praedicandi* as his point of departure, and Kienzle 2000c, p. 285, who thinks in terms of the Latin monastic sermon from the twelfth century.

by an *exhortatio*, in which the monk is exhorted to apply the lesson to his own life.

III Conclusion
1. Summary and or/conclusion
2. Closing formula, consisting, for example, of a prayer and a doxology (hymn of praise).

It goes without saying that this is just a very general model, and actual practice need not have exhibited all of these features.

I will now illustrate a number of characteristic problems that accompany the study of the medieval sermon, based on the example of the *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* by Bernard of Clairvaux (†1153). Bernard's sermons on the *Song of Songs* constitute one of the finest and most important cycles of monastic sermons of the Middle Ages, and moreover they did not fail to exert an influence upon the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons*.[98] It was around 1136 that the abbot of Clairvaux began to explicate for his fellow monks his vision of the theological implications of one of the most poetic and dramatic texts in the Bible, the *Song of Songs*. In itself this was nothing new. Numerous Christian authors had preceded him in writing exegetical studies of biblical texts, but usually they did this in the form of commentaries. Bernard decided, however, to cast his commentary on the *Song of Songs* in the form of sermons, an indication of the high status the genre enjoyed in his day. His explication of the text proceeded at an amazingly slow pace; a single word or concept from the *Song of Songs* could form the basis of an entire sermon, and often more than one. Just the first verse of the *Song of Songs*—*Osculetur me osculo oris sui, quia meliora sunt ubera tua vino*—served as the basis for eight sermons. Bernard continued to work on his cycle of sermons right up to his death. By that time he had completed 86 sermons and he had worked his way only as far as the *Song of Songs* 3:1. His work was continued by another Cistercian, Gilbert of Hoyland, abbot of Swineshead, in England. But he, too, failed to work his way all the way through the

[98] Ed. Leclercq, Talbot & Rochais 1957–1977, vol. 1 and 2; a complete translation in English is printed in *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Song of Songs* 1971–1980; the as-of-yet unfinished Verdeyen & Fasetta 1996–…provides an annotated Latin text with a parallel French translation. Recent surveys of the work and meaning of Bernard of Clairvaux are provided e.g. by Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 1, pp. 229–275, McGinn 1991–…, vol. 2, pp. 158–224 and Dinzelbacher 1998.

lengthy *Canticum canticorum*. Yet another English abbot, John of Ford, ultimately completed the series.

A debate has been raging for some time now about whether Bernard could have delivered his *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* to the monks at Clairvaux in the superior form in which they have come down to us. The extant texts give the impression that they were recorded straight from Bernard's mouth. The famous abbot seems to be physically present in his sermons and frequently makes mention of his own frame of mind. He also regularly refers to the historical reality of the chapterhouse of Clairvaux, where guests are present and his brethren sit yawning, and sometimes even sleeping. Hence the fact that it is often taken for granted that the *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* constitute a more or less exact representation of sermons delivered by Bernard in the chapterhouse of the abbey of Clairvaux.

Jean Leclercq, co-editor of the *S. Bernardi Opera*, arrived at quite different conclusions, however, after many years of intensive study of the sources.[99] Leclercq stresses that Bernard was very well aware of his rhetorical and literary talents. It is clear from surviving correspondence that he regarded his commentary on the *Song of Songs* in sermon form as a literary work, about which he would sometimes ask the opinion of others. Leclercq also points out that in his *Sermones* Bernard frequently employs the second person singular where one would normally expect the plural in a genuine preaching context. In his view, this suggests that these texts were sermons meant to be read by individuals, and could not have been delivered orally by Bernard in their current form. Nor does there appear to be room in the Cistercian daily schedule for sermons of the length of those bequeathed to us by Bernard. The concrete references to the chapterhouse and the monks in the *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* must therefore be seen, according to Leclercq, as clever hints from a great literary mind, who understands that he must make clear to his audience in which genre he is working. Such features are most prominent at the beginning and end of the *Sermones*, where the tone of the sermon is established, and much less so in the theological exposition in the middle. Leclercq ultimately concluded that Bernard did indeed preach to the brethren of Clairvaux on the *Song of Songs*, and that the *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* undoubtedly

[99] Leclercq 1955; *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Song of Songs* 1971–1980, vol. 2, VII–XXX gives an English translation of this article, without explicitly stating as much.

exhibit signs of this, but that the extant sermons on the *Song of Songs* are an independent literary work, and not directly representative of the sermons he actually delivered.

If Leclercq's convincing argument seemed to decide the matter once and for all, a number of years ago it was Christopher Holdsworth who, following a critical assessment of Leclercq's most important arguments, arrived at an opposite conclusion.[100] Holdsworth maintains that medieval authors like Bernard of Clairvaux were quite capable of composing complicated sermons in their heads and subsequently deliver them from the pulpit, whereby they were also flexible enough to include references to topical situations in the church, chapel or chapterhouse.[101] The high literary quality of the extant *Sermones* need not therefore mean that they were composed after the fact. In Holdsworth's view, they could well have been delivered in more or less their surviving form in the chapterhouse of Clairvaux. In the meantime, the debate continues and the question remains whether the controversy surrounding the *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* can ever be resolved.[102]

As Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* make clear, medieval authors of sermons were very much aware of the fact that the sermon is a genre that presupposes a context of performance. In composing their sermons they therefore added all manner of elements designed to suggest an actual preaching situation. The strangest example of this practice are perhaps the German sermons of Berthold von Regensburg (†1272), the bulk of which were recorded after his death by his fellow Franciscan brethren.[103] They based their content on the huge number of Latin sermons Berthold had written. In the posthumous German adaptations the famous preacher is presented as if he

[100] Holdsworth 1998. Verdeyen & Fasetta, 1996, vol. 1, pp. 27–32 also assume that Bernard delivered his sermons on the Song of Songs more or less in this way.

[101] Johannes Busch († ca. 1480) relates in his *Liber de origine devotionis modernae* concerning Geert Grote (†1384) that the latter reconstructed from memory a sermon by Bernard of Clairvaux on Paul's conversion (Grube 1886, p. 252; See also Mertens (in press a).

[102] Dinzelbacher 1998, p. 185 is of the opinion that the sermons on the Song of Songs were indeed delivered orally. Kienzle 2000c, 291–292 supports Leclercq and points to other Cistercian authors who added fictional elements to their sermons in order to feign a preaching context. Verbaal 2000 believes that Holdsworth pays too little attention to the process of redaction that an oral text undergoes when it is committed to writing, and thereby underscores Leclercq's position.

[103] Ed. Pfeiffer & Strobl 1862–1880. For a succinct treatment of Berthold see Banta 1978; cf. Schiewer 2000, pp. 868–870.

were preaching in the here and now, complete with addresses to the audience and references to topical situations. For most of Berthold's vernacular sermons, however, it has been established that they were reconstructed after the fact and were never read out loud in their current form. We may suspect as much for many other surviving sermons, though historical proof is wanting.[104]

In actual practice it is often difficult to draw a sharp distinction between the sermon and a number of related medieval prose genres, such as the letter, the commentary or the treatise. With a few simple alterations a text can go from one genre to the other, as again Bernard of Clairvaux illustrates: his sermons 65 and 66 on the *Canticum canticorum* were originally letters to the Premonstratensian Everwin of Steinfeld, who had asked him to formulate arguments against the heresy that had emerged in the Rhineland.[105] Incidentally, many of Bernard's other sermons assumed almost the status of a treatise by virtue of their length and exegetical nature.[106] Thus it is that in the corpus of surviving medieval religious prose there are many texts which present themselves as sermons, but which do not meet our modern definition of a sermon. On the other hand there are also texts which do fit the model, but are not identified as such in the medieval sources.[107] Within the currently on-going project to catalogue the inventory of the medieval German and the medieval Dutch sermon tradition, therefore, a very limited number of pragmatic criteria are being used which determine whether a sermon is to be included or not.[108] A text is included in the catalogue of the Middle Dutch sermon if it meets one of the following criteria: the inscription labels it a sermon, the text exhibits the formal characteristics of a sermon or the text is part of a collection of sermons.[109] In this way texts are included which stand at some remove from

[104] Cf. Schiewer 1992c for a wider perspective.

[105] Cf. Leclercq 1955, pp. 74–75 and Kienzle 2000c, p. 291.

[106] Leclercq 1955, pp. 77–78 stresses that both the surviving Song of Songs sermons and Bernard's liturgical sermons were too long to have functioned as actual sermons.

[107] Zieleman 1993, p. 71 points in this context (following A. Schönbach) to the 'Mangel der Predigtform' in many of the surviving Middle Dutch sermon texts, that agree only up to a point with the rules laid out in the *artes praedicandi*. Zieleman attributes this to the various stages undergone by these sermons in the process of being turned into literary works.

[108] The criteria used for the German index of sermons are described in Schiewer & Samson-Himmelstjerna 1993, p. 344: 1) the text exhibits oral features, 2) the text is associated with the liturgy, and 3) the text has been preserved in a sermon context.

[109] Sherwood-Smith & Stoop 2003.

the sermon genre, such as, for example, overgrown glosses intended to explicate difficult passages from the bible, or treatises and long citations from the church fathers, etc. There are also texts among the *Limburg sermons* which exhibit hardly any features of the sermon at all, but are nevertheless included in the aforementioned catalogue.

There exists, moreover, considerable uncertainty concerning the language in which the medieval sermon was delivered. By far and away the greatest number of surviving sermons were written in Latin.[110] But this need not imply that they were preached in Latin. It is an established fact that Bernard of Clairvaux preached in the vernacular; we need only think of his crusade campaign of 1146–1147, which would have had little success if he had tried to deliver his message to the lay folk in Latin. But would Bernard also have attempted to explain the meaning of the Song of Songs to his fellow monks of Clairvaux in their mother tongue? At first blush this seems unlikely. We may safely assume that monks in the twelfth century preached to each other exclusively in Latin.[111] Kurt Ruh, however, is of the opinion that, with an eye to the presence in the chapterhouse of the lay brethren of Clairvaux, Bernard delivered his sermons on the Song of Songs in French.[112] This argument is not immediately convincing: in his first sermon on the Song of Songs, Bernard addresses an explicitly elite monastic audience, and it is all but certain that the lay brethren were not included.[113] There are, moreover, numerous sermons written in the so-called 'macaronic' style, i.e. in Latin, but peppered with all kinds of vernacular phrases, idioms and exempla, etc. It is assumed that such sermons were intended for a lay audience, yet nevertheless recorded in Latin, whereby certain characteristic turns of phrase remained in the vernacular.[114] Even though Bernard's sermons are not written in the macaronic style, the last word has not been said concerning whether

[110] An impression of the colossal dimensions of the Latin tradition is provided by the eleven volumes of Schneyer 1969–1990, which cover the period 1150 tot 1350.

[111] Kienzle 2000c, pp. 287–288.

[112] Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 1, 252.

[113] For the subservient role assumed by the Cistercian lay brothers, see § 1.5 n. 336.

[114] For more on macaronic language, see Kienzle 2000b, pp. 149–150, with bibliography. For the OF see Zink 1976, especially pp. 91–102, who suggests that such macaroni sermons were actually delivered as they are recorded, i.e. bilingually—and not in a complete French translation, as has always been assumed—the idea being to give the texts a higher, more orthodox standing.

he preached in French.[115] It is clear, however, that though he may have preached in the vernacular, the Latin *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* are indeed literary constructions after the fact.

The need arose very early on for translations into the vernacular of Latin sermons by the Church Fathers. The German speaking region, for example, boasts a ninth-century translation of one of Bede's homilies, as well as the *Altdeutsche Predigtsammlung A–C* from the eleventh century, in which are included translations of sermons by Augustine, Gregory and Bede, respectively.[116] Bernard of Clairvaux, too, enjoyed in his lifetime considerable theological and moral authority, and he is therefore considered the last Church Father. By virtue of their authoritative status, the *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* were translated shortly after they were first published. There is a twelfth-century manuscript from modern-day Wallonia containing a series of translations into Old French.[117] According to Ruh, in his history of western mysticism, Bernard's *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* had a profound influence on medieval vernacular mysticism, especially the German and Dutch.[118] In this light it is surprising to discover that there are hardly any complete medieval translations of the *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* in the German-speaking regions. There is only the Bavarian translation dating to ca. 1450.[119] Bernard of Clairvaux's commentary on the Song of Songs

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[115] Cf. Leclercq 1955, 82 n. 4. On the same page Leclercq cites the Latinist Christine Mohrmann, who found so many elements of his own language in Bernard's splendid Latin that she called him ironically 'le premier grand prosaïste français' [the first great French prose author] (on Bernard's Latin, see also Mohrmann 1958).

[116] For more on these ancient German sermons, see Morvay & Grube 1974, T1–8.

[117] Ms. Nantes, Bibliothèque du Musée, Dobrée 5; See further Zink 1976, pp. 28–32. The Bernard sermons in this ms. have been published by Robert Allan Taylor, *Li sermon saint Bernart sor les Cantikes. Traduction and ancien français des «sermones super cantica» de Bernard de Clairvaux. Edition du manuscrit 5 du Musée Dobrée Nantes, avec introduction, glossaire et l'original latin and bas du texte*. 2 vols.. Toronto, 1966 (unpublished dissertation; I have not been able to consult this study). There are further Old French translations of patristic homilies (see § 4.4).

[118] Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 1, pp. 249–250. For the influence of Bernard on MDu. literature, cf. Van Mierlo 1953; pp. 237–239 deal specifically with the *LS*.

[119] An overview of the German and Dutch translations of the Song of Songs sermons is provided by Höver 1978, p. 755; Höver 1971 is mostly devoted to the Bavarian translation, which was presumeably composed in the presence of the benedictine Bernard von Waging from the abbey of Tegernsee. Of a small number of *Canticum canticorum* sermons, namely the nos. 1, 15, 26 and 43, there exist Middle Dutch translations or excerpts (cf. Höver 1978, p. 755). More comprehensive translations of the Song of Songs sermons are composed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

was apparently received primarily in Latin in this region, to emerge only later in the vernacular mystic tradition.

We leave off our discussion of the Latin sermons and turn now to the vernacular sermon traditions that gradually gained equal footing with the Latin in the course of the Middle Ages. In order to properly contextualize the Middle Dutch sermon and the *Limburg sermons* it will prove useful to present briefly the traditions of the three most important linguistic areas adjoining Middle Dutch: the English, the French and the German. But first we should pause briefly to consider the fourth, often overlooked adjoining language, Old Frisian, used almost exclusively during the Middle Ages to record legal texts. And yet it is certain that sermons were delivered in Old Frisian. Concerning Jarich, seventh abbot of the premonstratensian abbey of Mariëngaarde near Hallum (1238–1240), it is known that he frequently preached to lay audiences in Old Frisian, or so we may assume. When Jarich decided to record his sermons, however, like so many of his brethren he did it in Latin. Unfortunately, even these Latin sermons have been lost.[120] Although the Frisian lands exhibit a great blossoming of the monastic life from the thirteenth century on, a monastic literary tradition in Old Frisian is practically non-existent.[121]

A considerable body of homiletic literature emerges in England just prior to the turn of the millennium. The oldest collections are the anonymous *Vercelli Homilies* and *Blickling Homilies*. Shortly after their appearance the names of two known authors emerge in the persons of Ælfric (ca. 995–ca. 1020) and archbishop Wulfstan of York (†1023), both of whom produced at least one series of homilies.[122] Their sermons continued to be copied into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. During the Middle English period the sermon genre flourished once again. Two late fourteenth-century collections dominate the tradition. The 'Wycliffite sermons' were not penned by the church reformer John Wycliff himself, but are pervaded with the spirit of the Lollards, who, among other things, rejected the veneration of non-Biblical saints. Criticism of the church and satire are therefore prominent elements

[120] See Lambooij & Mol 2001, 398 r. 19–23; cf. Axters 1950–1960, vol. 1, 288, Jansen & Janse 1991, pp. 342–343 and Scheepsma 2003, pp. 184–185.

[121] On the flourishing of monastic life in Frisia from the twelfth century on see Mol 2001 and Lambooij & Mol 2001, 59–130; for the consequences thereof for literacy, see Bremmer 2004.

[122] For the Old English sermons, see Cross 2000.

in these sermons. In contrast to these is the orthodox *Festial*, a large collection containing saints' lives and sermons *de tempore*.[123] The English sermon tradition appears to have had hardly any influence at all on the Middle Dutch tradition.

The French sermon tradition flourished somewhat later than the English, though there is a version of a *Sermon of Jonah* dating to about 950. But from the twelfth century on the sermon genre manifests itself strongly in this region.[124] Of immense influence were the Latin homilies on the Sunday Gospel by the Parisian Bishop Maurice de Sully (ca. 1120–ca. 1190), which soon made their way into the tradition in Old French translation (a translation in the Kentish dialect was also produced). From the thirteenth century on, the mendicant orders had a virtual monopoly on preaching in the French cities. The vast majority of the surviving sermons are therefore not contemplative in nature, but rather more generally moralistic. They were, after all, written primarily with a lay audience in mind.

In his overview of sermons in the Romance languages dating to before 1300 (Old French is predominant among them, though Provençal, Iberian and Gallo-Italian are also represented), Michel Zink counts over seven hundred items, many of which are preserved in multiple copies.[125] A strikingly high number of manuscripts originated in the regions of Wallonia and northern France.[126] This fact is not without importance for the *Limburg sermons*, which were, after all, composed in the immediate vicinity of this region. Based on their contents, some of the Old French sermons unmistakeably originated in the northern part of the *langue d'oïl*. Zink points, for example, to a manuscript in ms. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 2058, in which the faithful are implored to dike in their soul, in order that they not be overwhelmed by the seas of temptation.[127] The imagery employed here, of *dikes* and *escluses*

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[123] For more on the Middle English sermon, see Spencer 2000.

[124] Overviews are provided by R[obson] [z.jr.], Zink 1984 (with special attention paid to the period 1300) and Taylor 2000 (with special emphasis on the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries).

[125] See the index in Zink 1976, pp. 481–524.

[126] For more on this, see § 4.4 and 4.5.

[127] *Ame craceuse est ame qui n'a pas restraintes ses meurs, qui au dehors les laisent courre* […]; *si sunt ausi com iaue conrans et comme mers ki onques n'arieste. Et n'avient a la fois quant li mers s'espart, c'on lieve les dikes, c'est a dire autant comme escluses ki retienent les iaues. and tel maniere est des mers ki laissent corre les iaues the lor affictions et the leur vains desiriers. Il convient lever les dikes* […]. *Li medisant si sunt les dikes qui retienent les iaues des vaines volontés. Et se les dikes n'estoient, li païs noieroit* (Arsenal 2058, sermon *Que parate erant intraverunt cum eo* (Mt. 25,10);

(channels), points almost inevitably to the coast of northern France and Flanders, where the first polders were being built from the middle of the twelfth century forward.[128] Moreover, the oldest manuscript containing a translation in Old French of the Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* also is of northern provenance.

In terms of source material, The Middle High German sermon tradition was of greatest significance.[129] Following an early yet tentative beginning in the late eighth century, the High German sermon tradition begins to flourish in about the second half of the twelfth century. At first there appeared mostly collections of model sermons, to be used in particular by the less well-educated secular priests for preaching in their parochial churches. The homiliary of Priester Konrad from the late twelfth century is the only one to have survived that is not anonymous. Konrad included in his collection predominantly homiletic Sunday sermons based on readings of the gospels and epistles, as well as a few sermons for important feast days.[130] There are all kinds of connections amongst the early Middle High German sermon collections. The much less rich Low German sermon tradition has been included in that network since the thirteenth century.[131] Although Middle Low German is linguistically closer to Middle Dutch than it is to Middle High German, there do not appear to have been any links between the traditions emanating from the west. There do not seem to have been any model sermons in Middle Dutch in this period (or later, for that matter).

The picture of the (High) German sermon is determined by three major collections.[132] Two of these are associated with the Franciscans, who made a significant mark on vernacular religious literature in the

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cited after Zink 1976, 57. On ms. Paris, BA, 2058, which is closely related to another northern ms., Paris, BM, 788, see Zink 1976, pp. 51–57.

[128] See Ryckaert 1980: the Flemish construction of dikes began in the first half of the eleventh century; quite possibly it is here that the first polders were constructed, as well (the oldest reference dates to 1142).

[129] A recent survey of the German sermon tradition is provided by Schiewer 2000; see Morvay & Grube 1974 for bibliographical information regarding published sermons. An index of the unpublished German sermons is being prepared in Berlin (for more, see e.g. Schiewer & Samson-Himmelstjerna 1993).

[130] For the sermons of Priester Konrad, see Mertens 1971.

[131] On the Middle Low German sermons, see R. Schiewer 1997.

[132] These three collections are discussed in Ruh 1984d together with the *Paradisus animae intelligentis*-collection (about which more below).

second half of the thirteenth century.[133] The posthumously published sermons of Berthold von Regensburg, which appeared shortly after 1272, have already been mentioned. The *Schwarzwälder Predigten* were composed toward the end of the thirteenth century, presumably in Franciscan circles, in Bavaria. This collection is comprised of two cycles of sermons, one for the *temporale*, and one for the *sanctorale*. Like the collected works of Berthold, the *Schwarzwälder Predigten* were intended to provide secular priests with appropriate preaching materials.[134]

The *St. Georgen sermons* constitutes the oldest known sermon collection in the German language that does not provide model sermons for secular priests or other professional preachers.[135] The arrangement according to the church calendar so typical for homiletic manuals—but also for other kinds of collections, such as monastic sermon cycles—is entirely lacking here.[136] Moreover, in addition to texts that bear the unmistakable characteristics of the sermon, we encounter here texts that might more appropriately be termed treatises. Shorter pieces have also been included that are little more than a long citation or excerpt.[137] The last scholar to devote a significant amount of attention to the *St. Georgen sermons*, Kurt Otto Seidel, contends that the texts collected here formed the basis for the constitution of the personal spiritual life, whereby they could be read (out loud) either individually or communally: 'die Primärsammlung war als Betrachtungs- und Erbauungsbuch gedacht.' [The primary collection was thought of as a book of comtemplation and edification.][138] Given this narrowly defined goal, the *St. Georgen sermons* could include texts that were not sermons, as long as they served some purpose for the meditative life.

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[133] Cf. Ruh 1984a.

[134] For a brief treatment of the *Schwarzwälder Predigten*, see Schiewer 1992a; on their genesis, see Schiewer 1996.

[135] Brief overviews of the *St. Georgen sermons* are to be found in Frühwald 1980 and Ruh 1984d, pp. 308–312; in what follows I will refer to much more specific studies (especially in § 1.3).

[136] Cf. Kienzle 2000c, pp. 300–301 on the organizational criteria for monastic sermon books in Latin: besides a variety of liturgical criteria, materials could be arranged according chronologically (e.g. according to the day upon which the sermon is to be delivered) and exegetical principles (e.g. sermons in which scripture is explicated, such as in the *Sermones super Cantica canticorum*). In the *St. Georgen sermons* collection there is no clear organizational principle to be detected.

[137] Frühwald 1963, p. 155, Seidel 2003, p. 236 and Schiewer 2000, pp. 901–902.

[138] Seidel 2003, 226–239; citation at p. 237.

The fourteenth century was the golden age of the (High) German sermon.[139] Around 1300 the Dominicans began to develop a new theory of mysticism under the direction of Meister Eckhart (†1328). His famous sermons constituted the most important, though not the only, medium for the introduction and dissemination of Eckhart's speculative theology. The surviving corpus of these sermons is not very large and yet somewhat complex. This is undoubtedly to do with the condemnation of a number of Eckhart's theses shortly before his death in 1328.[140] The sermons of Johannes Tauler (†1361), fellow monk and successor of Eckhart, were destined for a much wider reception, not just in the German-speaking regions, but in the medieval Low Countries, as well.[141]

The German-language sermon developed during this period into an important medium in the theological debate that was being conducted by clerics from a variety of disparate backgrounds, and it won an independent place for itself next to Latin. The chief witness to this development is the sermon collection *Paradisus animae intelligentis*, which must have been compiled around 1340.[142] This compilation contains more than thirty sermons by Meister Eckhart, but also works by a variety of other Dominicans (among whom one 'Dutchman', Floris of Utrecht) and a Carmelite. All of these sermons contribute to a fierce debate being waged between the Franciscans and the Dominicans over the priority of the powers of the soul. Whereas the Friars Minor maintain that the will is the highest capacity of the soul, in the *Paradisus* sermons the Dominicans argue that the intellect (*vernunft*) trumps the will.

In comparison with the sermon traditions in the surrounding language areas, the Middle Dutch tradition, to put it bluntly, is both late and thin on the ground.[143] In his recent survey of the Middle Dutch

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[139] For an overview, see e.g. Steer 1987a, pp. 318–339.

[140] For a succinct treatment of Eckhart see Ruh 1980; much more exhaustive are the monographs Ruh 1989a and Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 3, pp. 216–353, as well as McGinn 2001. A recent edition of Eckhart's works is Largier 1993.

[141] A brief introduction to the work of Tauler is found in Gnädinger & Mayer 1995; see also the monograph by Gnädinger 1993.

[142] A brief discussion of the *Paradisus* collection is found in Ruh 1989b; see further Hasebrink 2003. Steer 1987a, pp. 329–332 represents a somewhat divergent view of this collection of sermons.

[143] Currently the finishing touches are being put to the *Repertorium of Middle Dutch Sermons preserved in manuscripts from before 1550*; the first half of this repertorium appeared in Sherwood-Smith & Stoop 2003. In the recent survey of the European sermon tradition (Kienzle 2000a) the Dutch sermon is unfortunately conspicuous by its absence, but see now the handy survey by Mertens (in press b), which supersedes the very brief sketch by G.C. Zieleman in *LexMA* VII, 180. For more on the Middle Dutch sermon, among other things, see also Zieleman 1978 and Zieleman 1993.

sermon, Thom Mertens maintains that the picture of the surviving sermon collections is determined by two kinds of texts, namely sermons on the gospels and epistles, and 'conventual sermons'. Mertens prefers this latter term because it allows for inclusion of collections from semi-religious institutions such as the houses of the Sisters of the Common Life.[144] The Middle Dutch tradition begins toward the end of the thirteenth century, much later than in the neighbouring language areas. It is true that there are no complete surviving collections of sermons on the gospels and the epistle pericopes, but we may deduce from surviving fragments that such a tradition went back at least that far.[145] Incidentally, such collections were compiled in Old French (e.g. Maurice de Sully) and Middle High German (e.g. Priester Konrad) over a century earlier.

The conventual sermons are represented during this period, as well. With a little good will one may include the *Limburg sermons* in this genre, because they were irrefutably written for a monastic audience. The influence of Middle High German is considerable: two thirds of this sermon collection, to be precise thirty-two texts, consists of translated sermons from the *St. Georgen sermons*. While these translations have inherent value of their own, we can hardly postulate the existence of a Middle Dutch sermon tradition based on them alone. The *Limburg sermons* corpus includes sixteen other texts, however, a significant number of which are in all likelihood authentic Middle Dutch compositions. Not all of these texts may be designated as sermons—this is one of the reasons why the term 'conventual sermons' is not entirely unproblematic—but a number of them do certainly belong to this genre. There is therefore sufficient evidence to posit that at the end of the thirteenth century there existed a modest yet original Middle Dutch sermon tradition, about which very little is known.

The composition of Middle Dutch sermons was still not very high in the fourteenth century, though the corpus of collections of gospel and epistle sermons was considerably expanded. This relative dearth of

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[144] Mertens (in press b).

[145] On the Middle Dutch gospel and epistle sermons, see Zieleman 1978. Zieleman dates these to the fourteenth century, but the dating of the fragment Brussels, KB, IV 469 to shortly after 1300 in Kwakkel 1999b renders it reasonable to conclude that the Middle Dutch *evangeliën met de glos* already existed in the thirteenth century. The aforementioned fragment belongs to the so-called Berlin group, of which a few other fourteenth-century manuscripts survive; of these, the Amsterdam lectionary (Amsterdam, UB, I G 41) from 1348 is the best known.

surviving sermon texts may be attributable to the fact that the Dominicans did not enjoy the same dominant position in religious life in the Low Countries as they did in the German-speaking areas.[146] There was, however, a great deal of interest among the Dutch for the mystic sermons of Eckhart, Tauler and to a much lesser extent Heinrich Seuse (†1366).[147] These authors saw the widest dissemination of their work in the Low Countries, however, only later in the fifteenth century. The Modern Devotion then generated a staggering number of manuscripts containing religious prose, which drew heavily upon Christian tradition. It was during this period, as well, for example, that the reception of Bernard of Clairvaux's liturgical sermons was on the rise, while his sermons on the Song of Songs, as previously mentioned, were remarkably absent.[148] In this same period the reception of the *Limburg sermons* reached its highpoint. Moreover, the Modern Devotion produced a number of collections of original sermons and collations (conventual sermons), including among others those by Jan Storm and Paulus van Someren (sermons) and Johannes Brinckerinck and Claus van Euskerken (collations). Almost all of these sermons and collations were recorded by nuns of other female religious. They were generally intended only for intramural use and were seldom more widely circulated.[149]

Thus it is that the thirteenth-century *Limburg sermons* constitute a lonely outpost in the not-so-prominent corpus of Middle Dutch sermon literature. This early collection of monastic and conventual sermons appears to be heavily dependent upon the Middle High German tradition. In the following section the close connections between the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* will be further elucidated.

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[146] The most productive Dominican author from the Netherlands was Hendrik van Leuven or van der Calster (†1302/1303), of whom a number of shorter works are known. Among them is a vernacular sermon that was supposedly delivered by Mary in Cologne when Hendrik was sick and unable to preach. For more on Hendrik see especially Axters 1947, Axters 1950–1960, vol. 2, especially pp. 57–63 and pp. 80–83, and Kesting 1981.

[147] On the dissemination of Eckhart's works in Middle Dutch, see Ubbink 1978 and Scheepsma 2008; for the dissemination of Tauler in Middle Dutch, see Lieftinck 1936, Hoenen 1994 and Scheepsma (in press). The reception of all three of these prominent Dominicans is discussed by Mertens & Scheepsma 2003.

[148] Cf. Lingier 1990; cf. n. 119.

[149] On the sermons of the Modern Devotion, see Zieleman 1984, for more on the collation, see Mertens 1996; see also Mertens (in press b).

1.3 *The* St. Georgen sermons *and the* Limburg sermons

The nineteenth-century founders of medieval philology were often possessed of a remarkable degree of insight into their subject, given the incomplete nature of the sources they usually had to work with. The is also the case for the collection of texts now known as the *St. Georgen sermons*. We have already seen how Wilhelm Wackernagel, Jacob Grimm's brilliant student, had managed to isolate a group or related manuscripts, among which he also included The Hague manuscript containing the *Limburg sermons*. Max Rieger, who augmented and published Wackernagel's findings posthumously, focused attention in particular on manuscript G, from the monastery of St Georgen in the Black Forest. Regarding the origins of this collection and its anonymous compiler(s), however, they remained in the dark.[150]

The advent of Kern's 1895 edition of the *Limburg sermons* meant that for the first time a full service edition was available of a manuscript related to the collection from St. Georgen. Here, too, we cannot help but be impressed with the thoroughness with which the work was conducted: Kern had only a month to examine manuscript G in the University library in Leiden, where he compared the text to manuscript H (see fig. 5).[151] But not all such international interactions went so smoothly. Kern's excellent edition remained unknown to historian Karl Rieder, who produced an edition of the Middle High German text in 1908.[152] Although Wackernagel and Rieger had underscored the importance of the thirteenth-century manuscript G, Rieder nevertheless took manuscript A as the basis for his edition. The variants in manuscript G were included only in the apparatus, and longer passages from G are presented in parallel sporadically and only where the differences are truly great. Rieder attributed all of the texts in manuscript A to 'der sogenannte St. Georgener Prediger' [the so-called Preacher of St. Georgen], whereby he gave the impression that the collection consisted of eighty-six *St. Georgen sermons*. Falling just short of an actual identification, he associated this anonymous author with the legendary Berthold von Regensburg (on whose life story he had written his dissertation).

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[150] Wackernagel & Rieger 1964, especially 384–393.

[151] Kern 1895, Preface.

[152] Rieder 1908. A survey of all the *SGP* published so far is found in Morvay & Grube 1974, pp. 48–53 (T 57); cf. Frühwald 1963, pp. 17–24.

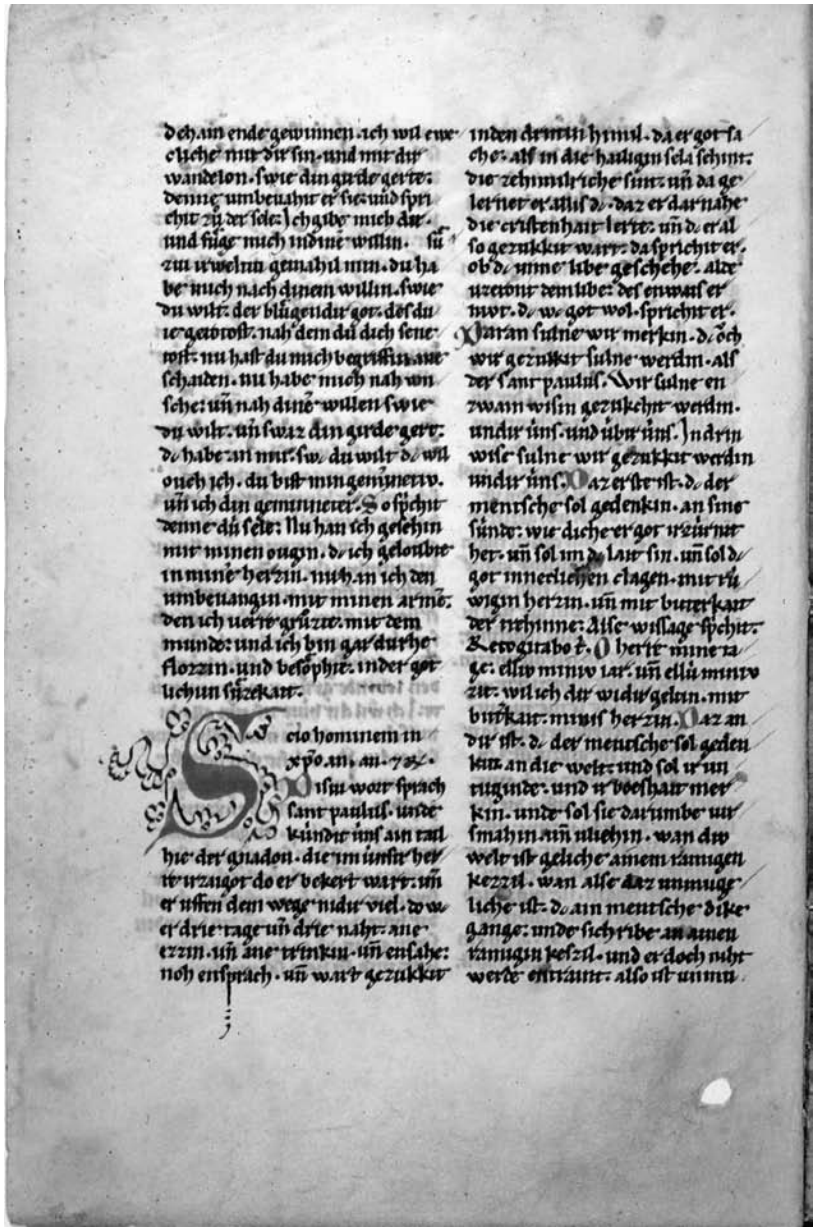

Fig. 5. MS Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. St Georgen 36, f. 19v.

In the 1950s Eva Lüders undertook a comprehensive study of the *St. Georgen sermons*, which was intended to be an extension of the work done by Wackernagel and Rieder, and in which the Middle Dutch tradition would be fully integrated. Lüders regarded Rieder's work as yet further proof of the unlucky star under which research by Germanists into the *St. Georgen sermons* was apparently fated to proceed. Rieder chose the wrong manuscript for his otherwise exemplary edition, erroneously ascribed all the sermons in A to one and the same collection, and moreover mistakenly attributed that collection to Berthold von Regensburg. In a series of articles Lüders proceeded to describe in detail all of the corpus manuscripts, i.e. all those containing five or more *St. Georgen sermons*.[153] Her untimely death prevented her from completing this work, but she made significant progress. Based on careful analysis of the preservation data, she determined that the original *St. Georgen sermons* collection had consisted of thirty-nine sermons, namely Rieder's numbers 36–66 and 68–75. (Manuscript G contained in all likelihood the entire series, but it breaks off in the middle of Rd. 71). The numbers Rd. 1–35, 67 and 76–88 have since been labelled the *Schweizer Predigten*.[154] Moreover, Lüders abandoned the notion that the *St. Georgen sermons* were the work of one author; in her view it was a compilation of already existing works, which may well have been supplemented with some newly-written material. Lüders therefore no longer referred to a 'Preacher of St. Georgen', but instead dubbed the sermon collection itself the *St. Georgen sermons*. Lüder's methodology was emulated in the Netherlands, where first Robrecht Lievens and later on G.C. Zieleman produced detailed descriptions of the Middle Dutch manuscripts from the *St. Georgen sermons/Limburg sermons* tradition.[155]

In the nineteen-sixties Wolfgang Frühwald published a monograph on the figure he still regarded as 'the Preacher of St Georgen.'[156] On the one hand he set out to trace the realm of ideas behind the original *St. Georgen sermons* cycle, while on the other hand he sought to map the developments that this compilation underwent during the Middle Ages. Frühwald stressed yet again the fact that we are dealing with monastic sermons here. Both their thematic content and their preservation

[153] Lüders 1957, Lüders 1958 and Lüders 1960; for ms. H, see Lüders 1958, pp. 50–59.
[154] For the *Schweizer Predigten*, see Schiewer 1992b.
[155] Lievens 1958, Lievens 1964 and Zieleman 1987.
[156] Frühwald 1963; cf. Frühwald 1980.

history permit no other conclusion. In the course of his analysis of their content, Frühwald highlights a number of subjects within the *St. Georgen sermons*, namely sermons on Mary (Rd. 47–49, 55, 64 and 69), Christ (Rd. 38, 58, 63, 70 and 72), the liturgy (among others, Rd. 39, on Stephen, Rd. 50, on the apostles, Rd. 51, on All Saints' Day and Rd. 61, on Paul) and life in the monastery (Rd. 54, 62, 73, 74).[157] It is immediately clear from this that many of the *St. Georgen sermons* do not fit readily into a neat scheme, as fully half of these texts do not fit into these global thematic categories.

Should one have got the impression thus far of a collection of simple—if not to say tame—monastic sermons for nuns, it must be noted that this is not entirely justified. Frühwald was the first to call attention to the high level of theological sophistication achieved by some of the *St. Georgen sermons*.[158] His crown witness is Rd. 56, a long treatise on the Trinity. Although strictly speaking the text does not deal directly with the mystic unification, the use of images typical of the mystic tradition is striking: the inner eyes, the ladders of the soul, the mirror or God, the taste of God, and last but not least, the beatific vision (see also § 4.1). If Rd. 56 remains fairly contemplative, there is one *Sankt Georgener Predigt* that does describe the mystic encounter with God directly, namely Rd. 60. This text, also known as the Palm Tree treatise, will be a recurrent subject of discussion in this book.[159]

The *St. Georgen sermons* were the subject of a thorough investigation by Kurt Otto Seidel.[160] Building primarily on the work of Lüders, this study employs the 'überlieferungsgeschichtliche Methode,' a methodology made popular by Kurt Ruh and his 'Würzburger Forschungsgruppe.'[161] Seidel's research into the history of text and transmission of the *St. Georgen sermons* encompasses both the German and the Dutch language areas, and spans the period from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. The transmission of this collection of monastic sermons is divided into two branches. The original branch x consists of a small corpus, restricted for the most part to the Alemanic region (globally speaking comprised of the Alsace, the Black Forest and the German-speaking

[157] Frühwald 1963, pp. 87–116.
[158] Frühwald 1963, pp. 117–139.
[159] Cf. Frühwald 1963, pp. 129–132.
[160] Seidel 2003.
[161] For the fundamentals, see Grubmüller et al. 1973; a discussion of this methodology is provided by Williams-Krapp 2001.

area of Switzerland). Branch y is more widely disseminated and covers a much wider area that extends all the way into the Netherlands. The Middle Dutch *Limburg sermons* belongs to this branch.

Perhaps the most significant contribution made by Seidel in the area of *St. Georgen sermons* studies is the very early date he proposed. Seidel was the first to be able to use Gumbert's re-dating of manuscript H, now the oldest representative of branch y, even including the Middle High German transmission. The recognizably old manuscript G, which belongs to branch x, has in the meantime been thoroughly examined by the palaeographer Karin Schneider in her study of German manuscripts from the thirteenth century.[162] G is featured in the chapter on the last quarter of this century; the year 1300—to which G is often attributed in the research—is in Schneider's view a terminal date. G could thus very well be somewhat older than H. There are in fact two thirteenth-century manuscripts containing a more or less complete cycle of the *St. Georgen sermons*, which moreover belong to the two main branches of the transmission.

Two further pieces of evidence of the transmission and reception of the *St. Georgen sermons* from the thirteenth century predate these corpus manuscripts. In manuscript G a parchment flyleaf has been bound in, upon which is written a portion of Rd. 59 (fig. 6).[163] That this fragment does not come from a manuscript containing a collection of *St. Georgen sermons* is demonstrated by the fact that the same leaf contains a Latin version of *De sancta Maria virgine*. The script of this so-called 'Vorderspiegel' is unmistakeably older than that of manuscript G; it has been dated to before the middle of the thirteenth century.[164] Seidel puts this version of Rd. 59 in branch x of the *St. Georgen sermons* stemma.[165] Moreover, rather extensive citations of Rd. 59 appear in *Die heilige Regel für ein vollkommenes Leben* [The holy rule for a perfect life], a set of instructions for religious from the middle of the thirteenth century.[166] Incorporated as well is a text that belongs to neither branch y nor branch z, but which does include errors from branch y. According to Seidel, this

[162] Schneider 1987a, vol. 1, pp. 249–250 and vol. 2, fig. pp. 148–149; she situates the dialect of G in the Black Forest. On G, see also Seidel 1982a, fig. 1–4 and Seidel 2003, pp. 62–65.

[163] Ed. Lüders 1972.

[164] Seidel 2003, p. 197; n. 4 cites a letter from Karin Schneider in which she confirms this dating.

[165] Seidel 2003, pp. 196–202.

[166] Further information on *Die heilige Regel* is provided in the next section.

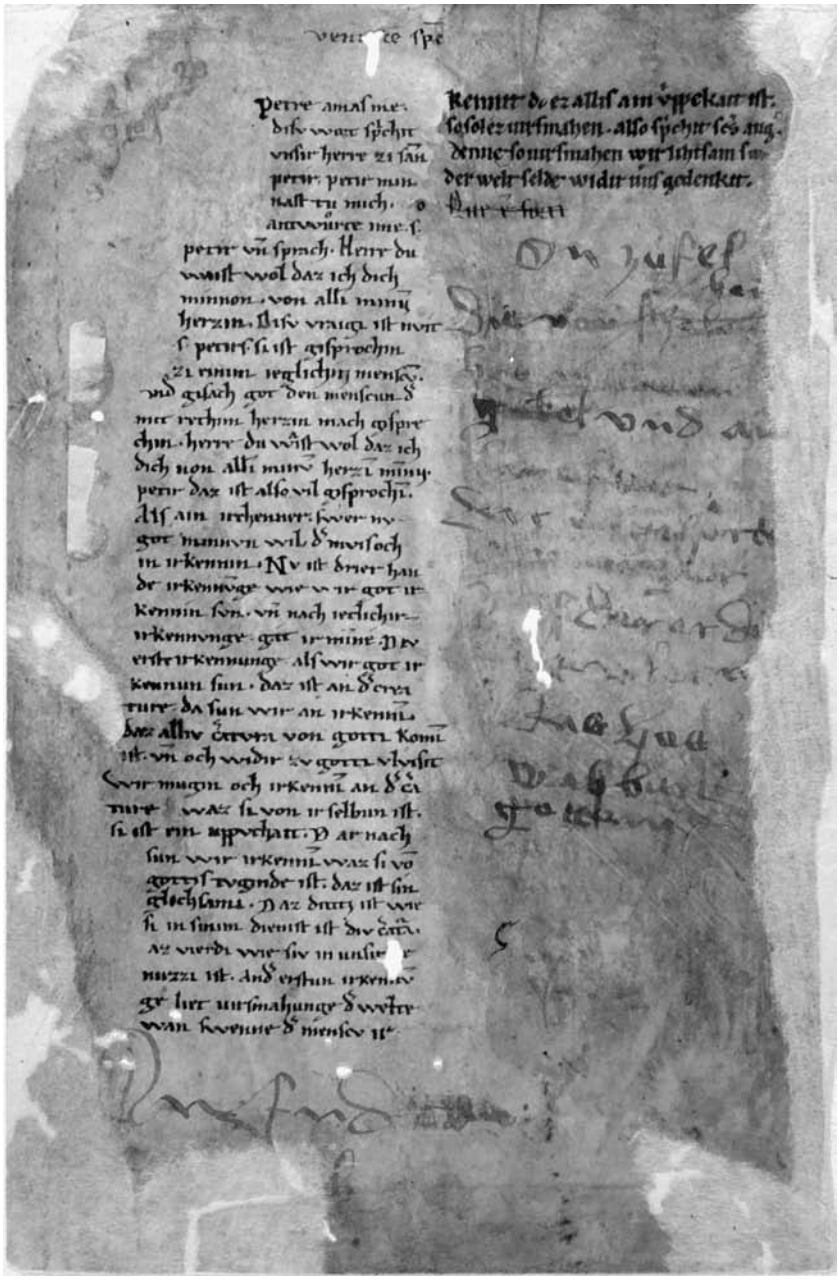

Fig. 6. MS Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. St Georgen 36, the so-called 'Vorderspiegel' with a portion of the text of Rd. 59.

suggests that the source of *Die heilige Regel* belongs not to the pre-history of *St. Georgen sermons*, but rather to their transmission history.[167]

Based on this evidence, Seidel arrives at an early dating for the *St. Georgen sermons*.[168] To begin with, he connects the temporal reference *drivzehen hvndirt iar* with manuscript G in Rd. 56 (f. 75ra), which supposedly dates the collection to the year 1300: in itself this is a fairly vague reference and is moreover continually modified in transmission. The dating of manuscript G to the last quarter of the thirteenth century cannot be reconciled with this temporal reference. Given the fact that Rd. 59 was already present before 1250 in redaction x, and that Rd. 54 was available to be used, in a redaction other than x or y, for *Die heilige Regel* around 1250, it must be assumed that the complete corpus of 39 *St. Georgen sermons* was compiled before the middle of the thirteenth century.[169] In light of the dominant role of the Alemannic dialect in the early transmission of the oldest branch—x—in its entirety, and of the earliest witnesses to branch y, it is very likely that the *St. Georgen sermons* were composed in the German-language area south of the Karlsruhe-Nuremberg line and to the west of the line Nuremberg-Konstanz.

The Middle Dutch textual tradition clearly has its own place within the transmission history of the *St. Georgen sermons*. It belongs in its entirety to branch y of the stemma, and occupies for the most part sub-branch y2.[170] Within the area of Dutch studies this prose collection from branch y2 has always been referred to as the *Limburg sermons*, a practice that I shall adhere to here. Both the 35 translated *St. Georgen sermons* and the sixteen texts contained in the oldest witness, manuscript H, are included in this text group (Appendix II provides an overview of the inscriptions in the *Limburg sermons* according to manuscript H, which will be used as titles in this book). When in what follows I refer to the *Limburg sermons*, I mean the collection of 48 texts from branch y2 as they are found in manuscript H.

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[167] Seidel 2003, pp. 202–205.

[168] Seidel 2003, pp. 196–210.

[169] Seidel 2003, p. 206 goes so far as to state: '[man muß] die Primärsammlung deutlich vor die Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts auf die Zeit um 1230 rücken' [the initial compilation should clearly be dated to before the middle of the thirteenth century, ca. 1230].

[170] For more on y2 and the Middle Dutch transmission, see Seidel 2003, pp. 172–182 and pp. 239–251; cf. for the *Limburg sermons* see also Lüders 1958, pp. 50–59 and Frühwald 1963, pp. 45–47 and pp. 51–52.

The y2 branch of the *Limburg sermons* comprises six Middle Dutch corpus manuscripts containing five or more translated sermons from the *St. Georgen sermons*. According to Seidel, the entire corpus contains 28 manuscripts plus four fragments; the y2–transmission thus constitutes one-sixth of the entire tradition.[171] Apart from the already exhaustively treated manuscript H, we are concerned with the following manuscripts (Appendix III provides a systematic overview of the *Limburg sermons* in these manuscripts):

– Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek, I E 28 (Am), compiled ca. 1450, based on dialectal features the manuscript was produced in Brabant, but further evidence concerning its origin is lacking. The manuscript contains a large number of *Limburg sermons*, but often in the form of independent adaptations or excerpts.[172] It contains two additional texts, one of which also appears in manuscript Br2: *Een scoen sermoen van onser liever vrouwen hemelvaert*. The other text is titled *Om veel reden wast nutte ende orberlic*; it is related to Rd. 63/Ls. 28.[173]
– Krakau, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Berol. Ms. germ. quart. 1087 (B1) contains a collection of 21 *Limburg sermons*, appearing here in their own order and often also in abridged form. Additionally it contains a number of other, rather extensive texts, such as the *Visio Tnugdali* and *Sint Patricius' vagevuur* as well as Jan van Ruusbroec's *Van den geesteleken tabernakel*. The manuscript is dated to the final quarter of the fifteenth century and originated among the canonnesses regular of Nazareth near Geldern, where it was probably written. Nazareth compiled a strikingly large and rich collection of mystic literature in the second half of the fifteenth century. In no fewer than four manuscripts there are texts from the *St. Georgen sermons* cycle (see § 4.1).[174]
– Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1959 (Br1) contains a collection of sermons, comprised largely of *Limburg sermons*, but Johannes Tauler

[171] For further information concerning the *SGP*, Seidel 2003 is now the standard source, and for further bibliographical data, as well. I augment Seidel only when new information has become available since its publication or when it involves scholarship relevant to this study.

[172] On the compilations of the *Limburg sermons* in Am see Lievens 1964, especially pp. 188–189, Seidel 1992, p. 21 and Seidel 2003, pp. 17–20, 299–304.

[173] For the manuscript, see Seidel 2003, pp. 17–20 and Lievens 1964.

[174] Seidel 2003, pp. 23–26; De Vreese 1900–1902, pp. 144–151 (M8), Slijpen 1937. On the manuscripts of Nazareth in general, see Costard 1992 and Tervooren 2006, 77–86 (by M. Costard).

and other preachers are also represented. Based on the dialect this manuscript must have been composed in Brabant, ca. 1450, but further indications for its localization are entirely wanting.[175]

– Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, II 2454 (Br2) was written in 1463 by a nun named Woutruyt. It resided in the library of the canonesses regular of St. Luciëndal in Sint-Truiden, which will have been Woutruyt's own convent. The manuscript claims to be *Onser liever vrouwen Marien spieghel* (*A mirror of Our Lady*) and to this end gathers together all manner of prose texts concerning the mother of God. Among these are six from the *Limburg sermons* tradition, presented in a fairly idiosyncratic order.[176]
– Cuyk, Kruisherenklooster St. Agatha, C 20 (La), derives its siglum from the Germanist Langenberg, who in 1902 had described this manuscript which for so long had been considered lost. The codex was found by G.C. Zieleman among the Crutched Friars in Cuyk, who had received it in 1907 from father Berning from Remsede (near Osnabrück) Given the fact that Berning possessed more manuscripts from the collection of Frenswegen, a Windesheim house of canons regular (near Nordhorn, Germany), it is likely that La also originated there. The eastern Middle Dutch dialect it contains also points in that direction. The manuscript dates to the period 1450–1470. The order of the *Limburg sermons* it contains matches exactly that of manuscript H. Unfortunately, the manuscript ends abruptly in the middle of Rd. 62/Ls. 20, making it impossible for us to determine whether additional *Limburg sermons* were included in this manuscript.[177]

The Middle Dutch transmission of the y2 branch further comprises fifteen confirmed manuscripts containing *Streuüberlieferung* ('scattered transmission'), in which fewer than five translated *St. Georgen sermons* sermons appear. Little attention has been paid to this scattered transmission by either Dutch or German studies. In this book, too, it will play a supporting role at best. From this perspective on the *Limburg sermons*, Seidel's 'Streuhandschrift 43' from Vienna should also be included among the corpus manuscripts. While it contains only two translated *St. Georgen sermons* sermons, it also boasts three additional *Limburg sermons*.

[175] Seidel 2003, pp. 39–41; Lievens 1958.
[176] Seidel 2003, pp. 41–49; Stooker & Verbeij 1997, vol. 2, no. 1144.
[177] Seidel 2003, pp. 82–84; Zieleman 1987.

This manuscript is known by the siglum W2, given the existence of a corpus manuscript W, containing *St. Georgen sermons* sermons. There remain seven corpus manuscripts containing *Limburg sermons*.

– Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 15.258 (W2), dating to approximately 1450, originated in the library of the canons regular of Rooklooster. The codex was presumably written there. though hard evidence for this is wanting. The manuscript is a compilation in two volume. The first volume contains the *Manuale* or *Augustijns hantboec*, and volume two contains, in addition to five of the *Limburg sermons*, a treatise on the seven canonical hours and Jan van Schoonhoven's first letter from Eemstein.[178]

It is now appropriate to define the character of the Middle Dutch tradition more sharply. For this task, too, we may fall back upon important preliminary work done by Germanists.[179] At the level of text collection the following are the most important differences between the Middle High German *St. Georgen sermons* and the Middle Dutch *Limburg sermons*:

– the *St. Georgen sermons* sermons Rd. 42, Rd. 43, Rd. 45 and Rd. 46 are missing in the *Limburg sermons* tradition. The last three in particular are not much more than collections of citations. Though in all cases we are dealing with very brief texts, and their very brevity may in itself be the reason why they were not translated, this state of affairs leads one to conclude that the *Limburg sermons* were made based on an exemplar in which these four texts were already missing. There is, in fact, a Middle Low German manuscript from the y2 branch in which they do not appear (Bi).[180]
– in three instances two shorter sermons from the *St. Georgen sermons* have been transformed by a simple intervention into a new *Limburg sermons*: Rd. 64 and Rd. 69 together constitute Ls. 21. Rd. 44 and Rd. 74 were used to create Ls. 26, and from Rd. 66 and Rd. 75 the

[178] On the ms. see, among others, Reypens & Van Mierlo 1926, 113*–114*, Menhardt 1961, 1392–1394, Seidel 2003, 145 (= Streu 49) and Stooker & Verbeij 1997, no. 1028.

[179] See especially Seidel 2003, pp. 172–182 and pp. 239–251, which in part builds upon the work of predecessors like Wackernagel, Rieger, Lüders and Frühwald.

[180] On ms. Bi, see Seidel 1982b and Seidel 2003, pp. 37–39, pp. 162–167, in this context especially pp. 242–243.

new Ls. 29 was compiled (see § 2.2). In itself it is hardly remarkable that two *St. Georgen sermons* sermons were thus combined; the short length of certain texts invited this treatment, as is clearly seen in the German tradition.[181]

– in a number of instances sermons from the *St. Georgen sermons* are reworked by means of a compilation or mosaic technique. This is the case in the aforementioned Ls. 26, which constitutes a contamination of Rd. 44 and Rd 74, whereby the text is rearranged. Ls. 23 makes use of material in Rd. 71, but rearranges it and leaves some out (see § 2.2).
– in the Middle Dutch manuscripts of the y2 branch a higher number of external texts is added than anywhere else in the *St. Georgen sermons* tradition.[182]

At the textual level, the *Limburg sermons* have in places been modified in comparison to their most important source.[183] Due to all manner of lesser omissions and additions, the Middle Dutch are more streamlined than the *St. Georgen sermons*. The translator had a good eye for the form of his work, in as much as he attempts to lend it a higher degree of unity. The original texts are emphatically aimed at nuns and contain a number of feminine pronouns. In the *Limburg sermons* these have for the most part been replaced by non gender-specific forms, whereby the Middle Dutch translation could target a larger and less narrowly defined audience. Also relevant is the switch to the first-person plural perspective, whereas the *St. Georgen sermons* were written from the stance of the second person plural. In the German sermons a priest, backed by the authority of the Church, addresses the faithful from a certain distance, while in the *Limburg sermons* the speaker is a member of the congregation, as it were.

Within the complex of transmitted manuscripts of the *Limburg sermons*, manuscript H occupies a somewhat anomalous place. It presents on a regular basis unique variants that appear neither in the Middle High

[181] Cf. Lüders 1958, pp. 58–59, Frühwald 1963, pp. 51–54 and Seidel 2003, pp. 241–243.

[182] See especially Seidel 1992. The independent compilation of new collections of texts appears to be a typical feature of Middle Dutch religious literature; it is a much more frequently occurring phenomenon in the transmission of the *Legenda aurea* than in the German-language tradition, as well (Williams-Krapp 1986, pp. 159–160).

[183] For more on this, see Frühwald 1963, pp. 25–75 and Seidel 2003, pp. 239–241.

German versions nor in the rest of the Middle Dutch tradition.[184] The text in H must therefore be a slightly modified version of the original Middle Dutch translation. The most striking change it has undergone is that it addresses a specifically male audience. As is the case in all y2 manuscripts, the original forms of address to a female audience have been made more general, but in a number of places in H brethren are specifically addressed as its readers or listeners. In the (unique) index to H, for example, Ls. 40 is referred to as follows: *Det sin de XII vrogte ende es een orberlic sermoen als de brudere onsen here suln ontfaen, ende es lanc* [These are the XII virtues and it is an edifying sermon that the brethren of our lord will receive, and it is long].[185] None of the other corpus manuscripts contains such references to a male audience, not even La and W2, both of which originated in male houses.[186] Apparently this is a characteristic feature of H, which as it were underscores its unique character within the tradition of the *Limburg sermons* (see Appendix IV for an overview of the passages in question).

Given the common variants that they share with H, all of the remaining corpus manuscripts containing the *Limburg sermons* must be traced back to a stage in the transmission that precedes H.[187] This could amount to a single manuscript, or, equally possible, an entire series. It makes sense to give this stage a separate label, inasmuch as it represents the very earliest phase in the textual history of the *Limburg sermons*. For it was at this stage that the Middle Dutch translation of the *St. Georgen sermons* was composed, that several shorter *St. Georgen sermons* sermons were combined, and that numerous lesser and greater

[184] Seidel 2003, pp. 179–182.

[185] Kern 1895, pp. 180, 25–28.

[186] There are more adaptations for a male audience within the *St. Georgen sermons* tradition. In manuscript Z the terms for a number of stations or offices were changed to male forms (*bruder, prior*) in Rd. 39, but a considerable number of female forms remain, apparently because the exemplar for Z had these forms. This manuscript later ended up in the library of the Dominican convent of Adelhausen near Freiburg (cf. Seidel 2003, pp. 114–116). Manuscript F was probably written for a male monastery as indicated by the forms of address that are employed in Rd. 54 and Rd. 55 (Seidel 2003, p. 61). There is one instance in Di of *brvoder*, but that is insufficient evidence upon which to base an association with a male audience. (Seidel 2003, p. 57). Manuscript Ph was probably intended for lay brothers in the Carthusian St. Barbara in Cologne, but is not especially tailored to a male audience. (cf. Seidel 2003, pp. 91–97); a similar situation obtains with regards to the otherwise unlocalisable manuscript U (cf. Seidel 2003, pp. 105–107) and for W, that resided in the Carthusian Gaming in Vienna (cf. Seidel 2003, pp. 125–128).

[187] Cf. Seidel 2003, pp. 179–180.

editorial interventions were carried out. Because practically all of the sixteen additional *Limburg sermons* appear in other corpus manuscripts or elsewhere, we may assume that all sixteen of these were available in this earliest of stages. Henceforth I shall indicate this first stage in the textual history of the *Limburg sermons* as H*.[188]

> Theoretically H* might in fact be larger than the currently known 48 *Limburg sermons*, namely if certain texts that appear in the y2 branch also belonged to this earlier transmission phase, but were left out of manuscript H. For the time being, however, I will assume that H, despite its idiosyncratic nature, represents the complete original *Limburg sermons* collection.

There is also, however, a fairly limited Middle Dutch transmission of the *St. Georgen sermons* that may be attributed to the y1 branch.[189] This even includes a corpus manuscript in an eastern Middle Dutch dialect (B2).[190] The manuscript hails from the aforementioned convent of canonesses regular Nazareth in Geldern, which constituted a remarkable intersection in the transmission history of the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* at the end of the fifteenth century. Its scriptorium possessed corpus manuscript B1, which belongs to the y2 branch, but in which there are also texts that contain variants from y1 (see § 4.1). The Middle Dutch y1 branch is incidentally an exclusively fifteenth-century affair.[191]

It is now possible to construct a stemma of the transmission of the *Limburg sermons*. For the sake of a more complete overview, the main branches of the *St. Georgen sermons* transmission are also given, in which the smaller branch x also includes the most important manuscripts A,

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[188] H* shares the position occupied by y2 in the stemma provided by Seidel 2003, 189.

[189] Seidel 2003, pp. 167–168.

[190] Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, ms. germ. qu., 1079. See Seidel 2003, pp. 26–28; cf. Costard 1992, p. 202.

[191] There are a number of texts in the Middle Dutch 'Streuüberlieferung' as well that do not belong in y2: Rd. 39 (Ls. 3) on *Stephanus autem* appears in a variant version in ms. Brussels, KB, 3067–73, f. 134r–142v (Ruusbroec ms. Vv; middle of the 14th c.; Rooklooster; cf. Seidel 2003, p. 135); ms. Berlin, SPK, mgq 1084, f. 36v–44v (2nd half 15th c.; Nazareth, Geldern; cf. Seidel 2003, p. 133); ms. The Hague, KB, 73 H 30, f. 125v–139v (2nd half 15th c.; St. Agnes, Maaseik; cf. Seidel 2003, pp. 137–138). There are also several manuscripts of Rd. 60 / Ls. 39 (Palm Tree treatise) which do not fit in the y2 transmission: ms. Cologne, Historisches Archiv, cod. W. 4° 135, f. 46vb–56rb (1469/1471, Rip.; cf. Seidel 2003, p. 140); ms. Utrecht, UB, II E 37 (1025), f. 249r–265r (15th of 16th c.; cf. Seidel 2003, p. 145).

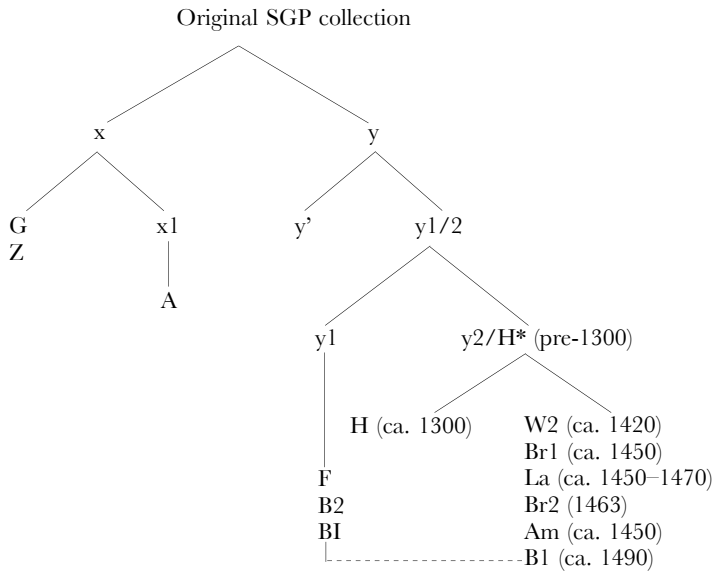

Fig. 7. General stemma of the *Limburg sermons*.

G and Z. The y2 branch of the *St. Georgen sermons* coincides with the *Limburg sermons* transmission. It has become clear that H occupies its own sub-branch of the stemma. Given that the relations among the remaining corpus manuscripts are as yet unclear, they are represented here as a group within the stemma.[192]

The stemma demonstrates at a glance that chronologically the transmission of the *Limburg sermons* has two core nodes: one in the thirteenth and one in the fifteenth century. The second of these may be attributed to the Modern Devotion, and its intensive reform activities in the fifteenth century. As far as volume was concerned, at least, it was during this period that the *Limburg sermons* enjoyed their highpoint. But in this study the main focus will be on the earlier, thirteenth-century history of the *Limburg sermons*, i.e. when this sermon collection was compiled with an eye to a specific, probably fairly limited audience. This compilation, containing the oldest extant collection of religious prose in Dutch, was a milestone in the literary history of the Low Countries. The question remains as to which milieu the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* is to be situated. As an initial step in our attempt to answer this question, in the section that follows we will first sketch the genesis of the *St. Georgen sermons*.

1.4 *A Cistercian Literature in the Vernacular?*

It is not difficult to demonstrate that the *St. Georgen sermons* were aimed at an audience of religious. This monastic aspect may have been somewhat diluted in the *Limburg sermons* tradition, but it fell well short of a fundamental change in perspective. Ls. 1 (Rd. 37), for example, immediately addresses *gestelike lide* (religious folk) in the first-person plural. In the allegorical language typical of the *Limburg sermons* they carry a shield with three points:

> En ort dat sin ons heren gebot ende sin leringe: die sal der mensce vlitelike hauden ende sinen rade na volgen. Dander ort es ene igelicke regele. Terde es die settinge die mer ons set ende heit. Dat sal der mensche gutlike

[192] Cf. the stemma in Seidel 2003, p. 189 and the justification that precedes it. The position of manuscript W2 in my stemma is based partly on Seidel 2003, p. 244 and the stemma included there in n. 144. My own investigations into the interpolations in the palmtree treatise (Ls. 31), that also appears in W2, confirms that H and W2 are not directly related (cf. Scheepsma 2001b).

> ende vrolike behauden ende sal sin herte dar tu ordeniren dat willeglike gehorsam sie sinre meesterscap ende sire ordenen.[193]
>
> [One point is our Lord's commandments and His teaching: men should hold them faithfully and follow His commands. The second point is a rule for everyone. The third is the monastic statutes established for us. One should virtuously and gladly observe these and order his heart towards them and willingly obey his authority and his order.]

The following passage from Ls. 3 (Rd. 39), on monastic vows and the monastic rule, is equally revealing:

> Nu sin menegerhande regelen ende geestelic leven, ende igelic heft sin gesetten ende sine regele. Mer die utgenomen dinc die sin in een igeliken geesteliken levene gelic, dats armude, kuscheit ende gehorsamheit. Dits ene regele dis rades. Sonder die mag mi wale behalden bliven, mer dits sekerliker.[194]
>
> [Now, there are many orders and monastic ways of life, and each one has its own statutes and its own rule. But the most significant aspects of the spiritual life are the same in each, namely poverty, chastity and obedience. This is a rule of good sense. Without it one may remain virtuous, but with it I am assured of success.]

God's commandments apply to all Christians, but this specific reference to a rule, vows and statutes can only apply to a monastic setting. Finally, Ls 13, referred to in the inscriptions as *Dit sprict van gesteliken levene* [This concerns the spiritual life], removes any hint of doubt. In this lengthy treatise on the spiritual life as a sojourn in the heavenly Jerusalem, it is dogmatically asserted *dat dat onmogelic sie dat enech mensche uten clostere ter hellen vare* ["that it is impossible for anyone to go from a monastic house to hell"].[195]

Numerous as well are the references to activities and customs that are typical of life in the monastery, such as fasting, *venie nemen* (confessing guilt by means of a previously agreed upon gesture or attitude) or holding chapter. In the following passage from Ls. 10 (Rd. 51), a number of such activities are discussed from the perspective of the religious over-achiever, a figure often encountered in religious communities:

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[193] Kern 1895, p. 186,4–10; for the reference to 'religious folk' see p. 187, 5.

[194] Kern 1895, p. 198,10–14; the aforementioned rules are further developed in passage 198,11–200,29.

[195] Kern 1895, pp. 313,31–314,1.

> Wi en sulen enweder vore nog agter varen; wi sulen altoes varen in der gemeinden. Nu willen sulke lide vore varen ende willen eer vligen eerse gevideren. Dat sin degene die sig sonderliker saken ane nemen ende willen luttel eten ende drenken ende noch men slapen ende en willen nemmer erwarmen op haren bedde ende nemen also vele venien ende disciplinen dasse al doef werden ende en weten nit watse duen. Entrowen, alse wanen vligen, so vallense ende werden decke die egterste die di vorste wanen sin.[196]
>
> [We shall none of us move ahead or lag behind, but always travel as a community. Now there are some who would rush ahead and wish to fly before they have feathers. These are those who take on special tasks and who will eat and drink little and sleep less, and who never warm their beds, and they hear confession and take penance so often that they become deaf and know not what they do. However, when they think to fly, they stumble and they who thought to be first, will be last.]

The author of this *Limburg sermons* makes the case for the golden mean, even for people who live in monasteries. This does not mean that they do not have a goal in life. In Ls. 4 (Rd. 40), the spiritual life is compared to a berry which is bitter when first tasted, subsequently becomes sweet and neutral to the palate. This, in a nutshell, is the monastic life.[197]

The world is not entirely absent from the *Limburg sermons*, but when it is present, it appears as an evil counter-example for monks. We find the following image in Ls. 1: *Hofsce vrouwen plegent sich te verwene met witter varwen ende met roder. Also sal sich di sele verwen met kuscheide ende met gedenckenisse ons heren martelen*. [courtly ladies paint their faces with white and red paint. In the same way the soul should paint intself with chastity and remembrance of our Lord's sacrifice.][198] The author of this *Limburg sermons* uses his knowledge of current cosmetic fashion to teach his (female?) audience a religious lesson. In a similar fashion in Ls. 10, the proclamation by the angel in the Apocalypse is compared to an initiation to a courtly celebration: it would be entirely inappropriate to refuse it.[199] But examples such as these remain exceptions. In the *Limburg sermons* and the *St. Georgen sermons* monastic themes dominate across the board. Nevertheless, the passages cited above do tell us something about the intended audience for these sermons, for it was

[196] Kern 1895, pp. 272,14–23.
[197] Kern 1895, pp. 212,13–19.
[198] Kern 1895, pp. 187,32–188,3.
[199] Kern 1895, pp. 267,18–29.

an audience that was apparently very much aware of the habits and customs of courtly circles.

Nor is it difficult to demonstrate that the *St. Georgen sermons* were originally aimed at a female audience. Whenever in the oldest Middle High German corpus manuscript G one encounters a reference to its audience, it is almost without exception to nuns. To give but one example from Rd. 50 (Ls. 9): *Swer Got minnet, der minnet ouch sine swestir in Got. Swer ouch sine swestir hazzet, der hazzet ouch Got* [Whoever loves God, loves his sister in God, as well. Whoever hates his sister, hates God, as well].[200] Every once in a while the chosen theme will refer directly to an audience of female religious. Rd. 62 (Ls. 20) uses the three daughters of Job—Dies, Cassia and Cornustibir—to describe the three kinds of religious: the novice, the advanced and the perfected. Subsequently the eight letters of the word *mulieres* are linked to the virtues that one devoted to a spiritual live should strive for: *munda, verecunda, leta, justa, erecta, robusta, electa, sociata*. This situation has been modified only slightly in the tradition of the *Limburg sermons*. Manuscript H, with its reference to monks, is a unique exception, but it adopts Rd. 62 more or less as it stands. Moreover, most of the manuscripts containing the *Limburg sermons* may be attributed to the circles of female houses. This was apparently the natural birthplace of both the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons*.

We may conclude that the *St. Georgen sermons* had their origin in the *cura monialium*. The pastoral care of nuns and other female religious was one of the powerful driving forces behind medieval religious literature in the vernacular.[201] Influenced by a variety of social developments—new economic interrelations, better schooling, religious zeal—there arose from the twelfth century on innumerable religious reform movements, in which a striking number of women took part. It was especially among these female religious that the demand for religious literature

[200] Rieder 1908, pp. 166,31–33; cf. the r. 10–12, where A is printed, which speaks of a *brüder*.

[201] There is a mountain of literature on the relationship between the *cura monialium* and the genesis of religious literature. I mention here only a few of the most important titles. Grundmann 1977, pp. 439–475 is the first to stress the connection between religious reform movements, the prominent role of women therein and the creation of religious literature in the vernacular. The critical Peters 1988 investigates the genesis of religious literature written by women in the Middle Ages and among other things concludes that the involvement of male religious was less than previously assumed. McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3 deals especially with the mystical literature written by women and other unschooled authors in the thirteenth century.

in the vernacular steadily increased. In certain reform-minded movements the provision of religious instruction in written form developed into a fairly common component of the pastoral care of women. The *St. Georgen sermons*, too, came into being at the nexus of reform-minded clergy and female religious, in this case nuns, who had a need for appropriate reading material which could aid in intensifying their personal spiritual lives.

The monastic signature of the *St. Georgen sermons* has never been questioned, but a great deal of energy has been devoted to debating the issue of the particular order in which it should be placed. Over the years this collection of sermons has been attributed to just about every major monastic order in existence: the Benedictine, Cistercian, Franciscan and Dominican.[202] That the Franciscan connection has proven to be the most tenacious is thanks mostly to Rieder's unfortunate speculations on Berthold von Regensburg's involvement in the composition of the *St. Georgen sermons*. Based on a thorough analysis, however, Frühwald attributed the earliest German collection of monastic sermons to the Cistercians. 'Wir haben an einen Zisterzienser als Sammler und für weite Strecken des Buches an einen Mönch desselben Ordens als Verfasser zu denken.' [We are dealing with a Cistercian compiler, and for large portions of the book, with a author from the same order]. Together with Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux is the most frequently cited church father in the *St. Georgen sermons*. If the collection was compiled in the first half of the thirteenth century, then a good case for Bernard's involvement could indeed be made. The works and ideas of the abbot from Clairvaux were subsequently so widely disseminated that the appearance of a citation of his work in a text says little about the spiritual circles in which it might have originated. In late thirteenth-century texts from Franciscan circles, like for example the *Baumgarten geistlicher Herzen* (see § 2.10), the works of Bernard are already abundantly cited. Moreover, the interest in the Song of Songs, in Mary, and in the Passion of Christ reflected in the *St. Georgen sermons* also points in the direction of Cistercian influence.[203]

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[202] Cf. Seidel 1992, pp. 27–28 and Seidel 2003, p. 210 n. 28.

[203] Cf. Frühwald 1963, pp. 155–158 (cited on p. 158); according to Frühwald the Victorian realm of ideas is not far to seek in the *SGP*, but this claim is not well substantiated. Ruh 1984f, pp. 308–312 also situates the *SGP* without any hesitation in Cistercian circles.

Seidel's work on the transmission history of the *St. Georgen sermons* resulted in a number of new arguments for a Cistercian background. *Die heilige Regel*, almost certainly produced by that order as early as the middle of the thirteenth century, cites numerous passages from one of the *St. Georgen sermons*. And Seidel's dating of the *St. Georgen sermons* compilation to ca. 1230 could be another such indication. For the Cistercian order experienced a period of intense resurgence at this time. The same holds true for the recently founded mendicant orders, but the question remains as to whether a literary project of this magnitude could have been produced by them at such an early stage. For the Benedictines, such an early dating of the *St. Georgen sermons* would historically speaking not be a problem. This ancient order found itself, however, in a crisis during the first half of the thirteenth century. This renders it less likely that the Benedictines would have undertaken such a reforming project as the collection of sermons for nuns.[204] After all, new initiatives in the area of religious literature usually go hand in hand with reform movements.

Seidel wants to situate the *St. Georgen sermons* within a somewhat broader context of a thirteenth-century vernacular literature with a clear Cistercian bent.[205] This implies an important nuancing of the view held by Germanists concerning religious literary history. In German studies the mendicant orders have always been the most significant creators of religious (mystic) literature in German, all of which builds upon the Cistercian Latin tradition.[206] Even before the middle of the thirteenth century, the Franciscans from Bavaria (David von Augsburg, Berthold von Regensburg, Lamprecht von Regensburg) began writing (mystic) treatises and sermons in Middlhe High German.[207] Around 1300 the torch was passed to the Dominicans, both in Thüringen and the Rhineland, when, with Eckhart in the lead, they took the mystic sermon to new heights. Seidel now situates, before this striking vernacular literature by the mendicant orders, a somewhat less pronounced yet

[204] Küsters 1985, 88–99 attempted to make the case for a Benedictine context for the *SGP*, but his arguments are convincingly countered in Seidel 2003, pp. 223–224, though the latter does leave the door open for a Benedictine origin in n. 78.

[205] In so doing Seidel builds upon a suggestion made by Heinzle 1984, p. 105.

[206] Cf. Ruh 1984c, p. 118, who imagines a threefold confluence of Cistercian, Franciscan and Dominican influence.

[207] For more on early vernacular Franciscan literature, see Ruh 1984a and Ruh 1984c, especially pp. 124–127 and pp. 140–144; cf. Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, pp. 526–537, on David von Augsburg.

no less characteristic Middle High German literature which, though not exclusively so, can be linked to the Cistercian order.[208]

Just as elsewhere in Europe, the Cistercians in the German-speaking lands experienced a remarkable flourishing in the first half of the thirteenth century. This period is therefore known as the second blossoming of Cîteaux.[209] During the first period, which corresponds roughly with the life of Bernard of Clairvaux, it was mainly male houses that joined the order, whereas the second blossoming is dominated by women. In the first half of the thirteenth century, the number of female Cistercian houses increased dramatically in what is now Germany, and levelled off at about 220 in ca. 1250. By comparison, at that moment there were 32 Dominican convents and only four female Franciscan houses. A few more statistics: between 1200 and 1250 there were created in the archbishopric of Mainz no fewer than 33 new Cistercian convents while in bishopric of Würzburg the number was nine and in Konstanz, fifteen. In the period between 1188–1277, the archbishopric of Cologne numbered no fewer than 34 houses.[210] These numbers would seem to suggest that from its central location in the French-speaking regions, the Grey orders had begun to conquer Germany.

Presumably there was fertile ground for the creation of vernacular religious texts within the flourishing female branch of the Cistercian order. After all, of most of the many women who entered the order it must be assumed that they only had a very limited knowledge of Latin. On the other hand, we should be careful not to assess the average level of knowledge of these nuns at too low a level, given the fact that within the order of Cîteaux the celebration of the Divine Office in Latin played such a central role. Moreover, the Grey orders recruited especially in aristocratic circles, where it was normal for daughters to receive a certain amount of education and they learned to read their (Latin) Psalters.[211] There will have been many female Cistercians who were able to translate their Psalters and otherwise to a certain point make sense of Latin texts.

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[208] Seidel 2003, pp. 210–226.

[209] The history of the Cistercians was written by Lekai 1977, who pays precious little attention to the female members of the order (pp. 347–363). For the history of the Cistercians in Germany, see *Die Zisterzienser* 1980 and Elm & Joerissen 1982.

[210] For the German female Cistercians see Kuhn-Rehfus 1980; Ostrowitzki 1993 deals in particular with the bishopric of Cologne (see the figures on p. 5).

[211] On the social backgrounds of the Cistercians, see Schreiner 1982; on the education of the daughters of the nobility, see Grundmann 1978b.

We find a striking example of the literary life in a female house during this period in the famous Lower Saxon convent of Helfta, which developed during the course of the thirteenth century into an important centre of mystical literature. It also incidentally maintained a rather remarkable relationship with Cîteaux. Although Helfta was founded as a Cistercian convent, it never joined the order; in the second half of the thirteenth century it came under the spiritual authority of the Dominicans.[212] It was here that Gertrud the Great (1256–1302) wrote her *Legatus divinae pietatis* in Latin. The *Liber specialis gratiae* by her fellow sister Mechthild von Hackeborn (1241–1298) survives in Latin, too, though most now believe that her visions were first recorded in German. Only Mechthild von Magdeburg's (ca. 1207–1282?) *Fließende Licht der Gottheit* is certainly known to have been first composed in the vernacular (though it was soon translated into Latin, by Dominicans from the monastery of Halle). The former Beguine Mechthild passed only her final years within the protective walls of the convent at Helfta, and worked in all likelihood on her writings during the time when she lived in Magdeburg and was not bound by a rule. In Helfta, then, thirteenth-century female mysticism featured both Latin and the vernacular side-by-side, though the impression is that the nuns preferred to use Latin. Only the beguine Mechthild appears to have used the vernacular exclusively for her literary work.[213]

When we go in search of a circle of potential female readers of German religious literature, we do well to cast the net widely. Besides female Cistercians, the beguines and other unaffiliated religious should be taken into consideration. From the end of the twelfth century on, ever increasing numbers of women came forward who wished to live a religious life, but could not or did not want to be placed in a monastery. They sought new opportunities to give expression to their spiritual ideal. Some of them remained in the world but lived as religious, others preferred to be enclosed. Yet others found a place in small religious communities in which no rule was followed or vows were taken: the Beguines.

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[212] Cf. Grundmann 1976, p. 221 n. 258, who believes that the literary flourishing of Helfta is in part thanks to the Black Friars.

[213] On the female authors from Helfta see Dinzelbacher 1994, pp. 223–231, Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, pp. 296–337 and McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, pp. 267–282; on Mechthild von Magdeburg, see Dinzelbacher 1994, pp. 208–212, Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, pp. 247–295 and McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, pp. 222–244.

> This is not the place for a detailed review of the historical backgrounds of the Beguine movement.[214] Over the years scholars of diverse stripe (church reformers, Marxists, feminists, among others) have eagerly pointed to the Beguines as a spontaneous emancipation movement of women who wanted to undermine the establishment. It would probably be wiser to account for the remarkable rise of the Beguines through consideration of church historical, demographic and socio-economic factors. The rise of the cities in the early capitalist economy led to new social dynamics, with on the one hand a new status for municipal patricians, and on the other a continually replenished urban proletariat, especially women, who came from the rural areas to try to find work in the new industries. These new social classes required a spirituality that matched their status and lifestyle.[215] The Beguines did not directly acquire a new place for themselves within the church hierarchy. Their status was comparable to that of the penitents, lay folk who did penance in the world for their sins, an institution that had existed for some time. Pope Innocent III (reigned 1198–1216) promoted this lay movement vigorously, which among other things is reflected in his acknowledgement of the Third Order of St. Francis.[216]

In the Episcopal city of Cologne the Beguine movement took off: following the foundation of the first house in ca. 1230, the city counted 99 houses in about 1320, and a couple of decades later as many as 106. The total number of Beguines in Cologne in the middle of the fourteenth century is estimated to have been around 1200, which amounts to several percent of the total city population.[217] Other cities

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[214] Three recent publications provide each in their own way insight into the history of (research into) the Beguines. The collection of articles Opitz & Wehrli-Johns 1998 situates the Beguine movement in the European context, in which Wehrli-Johns 1998, pp. 27–42 provides an overview of the history of scholarship on the subject. The conference proceedings Dor, Johnson & Wogan-Browne 1999 targets on the women's movement of Liège-Brabant (see § 1.5), whereby diverse articles focus especially on the Beguines. The monograph by Simons 2001 presents a new perspective on the history of the Beguines in the Netherlands, in which a brief history and evaluation of research on the subject is also included (pp. IX–XIII). Of the voluminous older studies I mention here just Greven 1912, Mens 1947 and McDonnell 1954.

[215] This historical view has recently been articulated in Simons 2001, pp. 1–34.

[216] Cf. Wehrli-Johns 1998, especially pp. 42–46; this contribution attempts to dispel as many old 'myths' about the Beguines and its origins as possible, while constructing a fresh, historical perspective that also takes canon law into account.

[217] The most recent calculations for Cologne, for the most part based on Stein 1977, is found in Janssen 1995, p. 591; cf. among others Asen 1928, Schmitt 1978, pp. 39–40 and Southern 1979, pp. 319–325. Stein 1977 shows how the population of the Cologne female monasteries and Beguinages corresponds during this period with the social stratification of contemporary society: maidens form the highest ranks of the nobility appear in the oldest foundations of canonesses regular in the city, the convents

on the Rhine, such as Mainz, Strasbourg and Basel, boast admittedly smaller but no less respectable numbers.[218] Furthermore, there were all manner of other modes of living for women who lived alone—which could also entail enclosure—or with one or two of their friends in a religious lifestyle. It was especially among these circles of women that one would expect there to be a great demand for vernacular religious literature, which the Cistercian order would have been able to meet. But the Cistercians were not the obvious ones to be involved with the spiritual well-being of the Beguines and other semi-religious females (at least not in the German-speaking regions; in the Netherlands it was a different story, as we shall see in § 1.5). This task fell almost as a matter of course to the new mendicant orders, who regarded it as their special task to provide pastoral care to lay folk. In the German Empire, the Dominicans became involved with the Beguine movement around 1300, especially in the south.[219] When their unregulated lifestyle was condemned at the Council of Vienna (1311–1312), most of the orders of Beguines were subsequently absorbed into the Third Order of St. Francis, and consequently they were placed under the authority of the Ordo Fratrum Minorum.[220]

Against this backdrop of developments surrounding the *cura monialium*, we shall now discuss the most important texts that are connected to the second blossoming of the Cistercians.[221] Most of these will be frequently mentioned throughout this book. The first traces of a Middle High German religious 'literature' for female Cistercians appear in a pair of richly illuminated prayer books for aristocratic ladies. The *Lilienfelder Andachtsbuch* [Lilienfeld book of contemplation] (ms. Vienna,

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were occupied predominately by the daughters of the patriciate, while the Beguinages were populated chiefly by women from the lower strata of society.

[218] Mainz: 28 beguinages with a maximum of 80 beguines; Strasbourg: 85 beguinages and a population of a few hundred beguines; Basel: 20 beguinages and 300 to 400 beguines. Cf. Schmitt 1978, pp. 39–41.

[219] Cf. Grundmann 1976, pp. 220–221.

[220] This decision was one of the reasons for the conflict over the *cura animarum* of the beguines that was brewing at the beginning of the fourteenth century between the two largest mendicant orders in the Rhineland. On what led to this 'Beginenstreit,' see e.g. Patschovsky 1998, on Strasbourg.

[221] Cf. Seidel 2003, pp. 210–211. As a work from an entirely different order, I leave the early Rip. *Prosa-Lancelot* dating to ca. 1250 out of the discussion, despite its assumed Cistercian origin (on this see Heinzle 1984, Beckers 1989, 29–31 and Seidel 2003, 211).

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 2739), dating to ca. 1200, originated at the female Cistercian convent of Lilienfeld in Lower Austria.[222] Full-page pen drawings of moments from salvation history, Latin prose prayers and short commentaries in verse in the Bavarian-Austrian dialect work combine to inspire the reader to deeper devotion. The *Lilienfelder Andachtsbuch* is directly related to the so-called *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* (ms. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 935), which was erroneously attributed to Hildegard of Bingen (†1179) in a sixteenth-century inscription.[223] The connection is apparent from the highly similar program of images—although the *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* contains much more beautiful illuminated miniatures—and an identical cycle of Latin prayers. The *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* dates to ca. 1190, but shortly before the middle of the thirteenth century the original Latin captions to some of the miniatures were replaced by captions in the vernacular, in the Rhine-Frankish dialect (for a few examples, see § 2.14). Elisabeth Klemm situates the common exemplar that must have been used for both the *Lilienfelder Andachtsbuch* and the *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* in the first half of the twelfth century, and designates as possible provenance the Rhine-Meuse region. She accounts for the extreme geographical separation between the two extant manuscripts by calling attention to the close contacts that must have existed among the Cistercian houses.[224] In these early examples of literature for nuns, then, Latin, the vernacular and iconography function in juxtaposition. This is still the case in a somewhat younger prayer book (ms. Trier, Stadtbibliothek, MS 1149/451) dating to ca. 1300, and originating at the female Cistercian convent of St. Thomas an der Kyll (in the Eiffel region). This manuscript was written by sev-

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[222] Ed. Menhardt 1941, pp. 167–184 (the German text); see further Masser 1985 (not mentioned therein is Klemm 1978, in which the *Lilienfelder Andachtsbuch* is exhaustively discussed and in which various miniatures are also included) On the ms. see Schneider 1987a, vol. 1, p. 32 and vol. 2, fig. 6 (Latin) and vol. 1, pp. 129–130 and vol. 2, fig. 6 (German): the Latin text dates to ca. 1200, the German additions to approximately a century later.

[223] A facsimile of the ms. is to be found in *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* 1982–1987, vol. 1; see further Klemm 1978 (which discusses *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* and the *Lilienfelder Andachtsbuch* in connection with each other), the articles in *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* 1982–1987, vol. 2 and *Krone und Schleier* 2005, nr. 200. The German annotations were published in Schneider 1987b. On the script see Schneider 1987a, vol. 1, pp. 66–67 (Latin) and pp. 160–161 (German) and vol. 2, figs. 28 and 89. Hamburger 1998, pp. 165–184 maintains that the *Lilienfelder Andachtsbuch* and the *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* should be reckoned among a larger family of manuscripts, the roots of which are to be traced to the middle of the twelfth century; he does not delve any further into the German additions.

[224] Klemm 1978, pp. 70–74.

eral male members of the order (of whom only the monks Johannes and Surz identify themselves) which given their dialect were from the Mosel-Frankish region.[225]

While the contents of these for the most part well-executed prayer books was primarily aimed at private devotion, *Die heilige Regel für ein vollkommenes Leben* is more likely to have been intended for a religious community in its entirety.[226] Its (partially preserved) prologue, reveals well the structure of this text:

> Dise helige regele theile wir in vier stucke.
> Daz erste: wie Gotes muter und alle die dise regele halten, ein lichame sinth in Gote und wi Jesus Cristus houbet ist des lichames.
> Daz ander: von Gotes dineste und von den siben tageziten.
> Daz dritte: was man halden schol und wi man schol beten und waz man vasten schal und wi dicke man nemen schal Gotes lichamen.
> Daz virde: von der minne und von den drin greden, ane die nimant kumen mag zu himelriche.[227]

> [We divide this holy rule into four parts.
> The first: how God's mother and all those who observe this rule are one body in God, and how Jesus Christ is the head of this body.
> The second: concerning God's service and the seven canonical hours.
> The third: what one should observe and how one is to pray and when one should fast and how frequently one should receive God's body.
> The fourth: concerning love and the three stages, without which one may never come to heaven.]

Unfortunately, this is about all we have to go on, for only the first part of *Die heilige Regel* survives, and even that is incomplete. We can nevertheless gain an impression of its anonymous author's methodology. The structure of this first part constitutes an allegorical discussion of the limbs of Mary, which each serve as an opportunity for brief theological exercises and observations on the religious life. The discursive line is constantly interrupted by exempla, which illustrate and support its points. Some of these are rhymed or show traces of rhyming; it may well be that some of them originated in the oral tradition.

> A great deal remains obscure about this eclectic, fragmentarily preserved text, but the Cistercian origin of *Die heilige Regel* is virtually incontestable. The author creates a special place in heaven for the *grawen muniche* [grey

[225] See Jungandreas 1980.
[226] Ed. Priebsch 1909; for a brief treatment, see Von Siegroth-Nellesen 1981.
[227] Priebsch 1909, p. 1,12–18.

> monks], cites Bernard of Clairvaux on a regular basis and draws his exempla from Cistercian sources in particular, such as Konrad von Eberbach's *Exordium magnum*, Caesarius von Heisterbach's *Dialogus miraculorum* and the *Vita prima S. Bernardi*. One of the few identifiable vernacular sources is the *St. Georgen sermons* Rd. 54 (see § 1.3). Although it is generally assumed that *Die heilige Regel* was written ca. 1250, the unique manuscript in which it survives (London, British Library, Add. 9048) dates to no earlier than the late fourteenth century. Somewhat tentatively Robert Priebsch argues that this codex must have been composed in the western Middle High German region (comprising among other dialects the Rhine-Frankish and the Mosel-Frankish ones). Given that the four hands that wrote the manuscript exhibit a wide variety of diverging palaeographical and dialectal characteristics, we are justified in concluding that the manuscript was created in one of the many Cistercian monastic communities that existed in the aforementioned region.[228]

The texts that have been discussed thus far can be localized predominantly in the Middle Rhine region, where the *St. Georgen sermons* are rooted, as well. Closer to the cradle of the *Limburg sermons*, namely the Lower Rhine regions, there came into existence an important group of thirteenth-century texts with possible Cistercian antecedents.[229] The three most important ones are *Rheinische Marienlob* [Rhenish Marian praise poem], the *Buch der Minne* [Book of love] (also known under the title *Rede von den fünfzehn Graden* [Sermon on the fifteen stages]) and *Die Lilie* [The lily].[230] Despite certain similarities in contents, they cannot be attributed to one and the same author, as was once thought to be the case. The *Rheinische Marienlob* is the oldest text; it is dated to the second quarter of the thirteenth century. The *Buch der Minne* and *Die Lilie* were written by the same anonymous author, who must also have been active in the second half of the thirteenth century. All three of these texts have a provenance in the area around Cologne.

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[228] On the script of ms. London, British Library, Add. 9048 see Schneider 1987a, vol. 1, pp. 259–260.

[229] On the language and literature of the medieval Lower Rhine region, see the articles in Beckers & Tervooren 1989 and Tervooren 2006. Beckers provides 1989 a sketch of the literary landscape, in which religious literature, however, is largely absent. This holds true to a lesser degree for Beckers 1995, where there is little or no treatment of the texts mentioned here. Tervooren 2006 fills this gap, at least in part.

[230] For more on this triad, cf. Neumann 1965, who suspects a connection between on the one hand Mechthild von Magdeburg and the Brabantine authors Hadewijch and Beatrice van Nazareth, on the other.

The *Rheinische Marienlob* opens with a prologue and two prayers to Jesus and Mary, both of which are provided with an acrostic.[231] This extensive (5146 lines) rhymed ode to Mary consists of six sections: part I alludes to a series of well-known symbols for Mary, among which are the moon, Eve, the enclosed garden (*hortus conclusus*), the sealed fountain (*fons signatus*) etc.; part II explicates the meaning of the name Mary and contains, among other things, an extensive *planctus Mariae*, in which the author varies his metre, rhyme scheme and stanzaic structure much more radically than elsewhere; part III narrates the life of Jesus from His mother's perspective; part IV recounts elaborately how and why Mary is ranked higher than the nine choirs of angels; part V praises Mary's beauty based on attributes such as her jewellery, the precious gems that adorn her clothing, her crown and her hands and feet; part VI lauds the blessed state in which Mary exists in heaven. The text concludes with two prayers in which the author commends his soul to the mercy of Jesus and Mary.

> The *Rheinische Marienlob* is preserved in just one manuscript (Hanover, Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, cod. I 81, f. 1r–93r). The language is Middle Frankish, but the original Ripuarian dialect is still evident. Both hands responsible for writing this manuscript may be dated to the second quarter of the thirteenth century.[232] The lost Ripuarian original is thus possibly somewhat older. The manuscript resided at the Carthusian house of St. Barbara in Cologne in the fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

The author of the *Rheinische Marienlob* was a member of the clergy is a fact he himself reveals, for he identifies himself as *ich unwirdich prîster* [Me, the unworthy priest].[233] We are not provided with much more personal information than this, though he does tell us that he is the author of other literary works. This lengthy ode to Mary is namely his *lester bu* [last book].[234] The literary awareness of this anonymous writer is apparent not only from his impressive command of matter

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[231] Ed. Bach 1934; for a brief treatment see Honemann 1992 and Tervooren 2006, 47–48. Dr. F.J. Schweitzer is currently preparing a new edition of the *Rheinische Marienlob*.

[232] On the dating of the script in the first part of the Hanover ms., see Schneider 1987a, vol. 1, pp. 158–160 and vol. 2, fig. 88. The script of the second part of this manuscript dates to approximately 1250 (Schneider 1987a, vol. 1, pp. 192–193 and vol. 2, fig. 113); this portion contains the poems by 'der Wilde Mann' [the Wild Man] and Werner vom Niederrhein, the *Kölner Morgensegen* and the *Ältere niederrheinische Marienklage*.

[233] Bach 1934, p. 46,1476.

[234] Bach 1934, p. 153,5143.

and form, but also from the fact that he characterizes his work as a book. This book manifests itself as a personification in the prologue and dedicates itself to Mary: *ich bin geschriven zů dinem love* [I have been composed in praise of You].[235]

There is a tendency in the criticism to search for the author of the *Rheinische Marienlob* in a Cistercian milieu, though direct links to this order are wanting. It has frequently been posited that the *Rheinische Marienlob* was written for one or more female religious women, but the text does not provide much concrete evidence for this assumption, either. And yet the spirit of monastic theology of Bernard of Clairvaux and William of Saint-Thierry with which the *Rheinische Marienlob* is infused does provide reason to locate this splendid ode to Mary in the context of the religious women's movement in the Rhineland.[236] The reader of the *St. Georgen sermons*, but also of *Die heilige Regel*, will recognize all manner of familiar themes in the *Marienlob*. Seidel notes for example the fairly strong correspondence between Rd. 74 and the *Marienlob* in a passage in which both texts symbolize pious virtues (chastity, humility, love) by means of flowers (lily, violet and rose).[237] Like *Die heilige Regel*, the *Rheinische Marienlob* also employs the nine choirs of angels as a basis for an elaborate allegory, but their execution differs greatly in the two texts. Whereas *Die heilige Regel* employs the angels to clarify certain aspects of the spiritual life, the choirs of angels in the *Marienlob* serve to emphasize the highest state, occupied by Mary.[238]

> We are justified in speaking of a Lower Rhine tradition in which Mary is praised, and in a multitude of forms. We note here, besides the *Rheinische Marienlob*, the older *planctae Mariae* that belong to this region, such as the *Ältere niederrheinische Marienklage*, which is contained in the second part of ms. Hanover, Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, cod. I 81 (the first part of this manuscript contains the *Rheinische Marienlob*).[239] The tradition was continued after the appearance of this showpiece, as witnessed by the Marian lyrics by Bruder Hans of ca. 1400.[240] He labels himself a *Nyderlender* and, given his dialect, must have hailed from the Venlo-Cleves region. Hans uses no fewer than four languages in his elaborate *Marienlieder*:

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[235] Bach 1934, p. 1,5. Cf. Green 1996, p. 129.

[236] Cf. Honemann 1992, p. 36.

[237] See § 3.6, where the texts in question are cited.

[238] Cf. Bach 1934, p. 60,1954–124,4214 (vol. IV) and Priebsch 1909, p. 60,8 up to where the text breaks off in the ms.

[239] Cf. Honemann 1992, p. 33. On this part of the manuscript, see Schneider 1987a, vol. 1, pp. 192–193; it dates to the third quarter of the 13th century.

[240] Ed. Minzloff 1863; for a brief overview, see Dreessen 1981 and Tervooren 2005, 278–280.

English, French, Dutch and Latin, whereby he gives explicit expression to what remained only implicit in the thirteenth century, namely that the literature of the Lower Rhine was exposed to a wide range of European influences.[241] Concerning his own language brother Hans has the following to say: *Can al man nut miin Duutsch verstan / Da ist geyn groses wunder aen / Eyn Nyderlender is geyn Swaab* [If not everyone can understand my Dutch / 'T is no great surprise / For a Netherlander is no Swabian.][242]

Die Lilie is a fairly brief treatise in which the lily, symbol of chastity, is used to explicate a number of Christian virtues.[243] The text embroiders in a fairly idiosyncratic fashion on the lily allegory from Bonaventure's *Vitis mystica*. The parts of the plant—root, stalk, leaves, six white petals, six stamens and stigma; the author has looked closely at the Madonna Lily—are explained allegorically and linked to spiritual exhortations. Thus unsurprisingly the triangular stigma stands for the Trinity; the reader is exhorted at this point to submit to the threefold godhead. Given the pronominal forms of address used, the target audience for *Die Lilie* must have consisted of women, but it would seem that the text was targeted at lay folk or Beguines rather than religious. The author does not provide any identifying information, but he was almost certainly a member of the clergy, who in discharging his pastoral duties wrote religious literature in the vernacular.

The status of the lily allegory from the *Vitis mystica* is not entirely clear. The editors of Bonaventure's *opera omnia* doubted its authenticity and published the text as 'Additamentum IV' in their edition.[244] If the lily allegory was indeed written by Bonaventure, then it could hardly have been composed before 1250, the date when this author began writing. This would mean that *Die Lilie* should be dated to the second half of the twelfth century. The only manuscript to preserve the text (Wiesbaden, Hessische Landesbibliothek, cod. 28) confirms this dating: the script dates to the seventies and eighties of the thirteenth century.[245] Based on its dialect, *Die Lilie* is given a provenance in the Lower Rhine region (or the Middle Frankish language region).

The manuscript from Wiesbaden that contains *Die Lilie* includes four further, shorter rhymed texts. They bear the following modern titles:

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[241] Cf. e.g. Willaert 1989.

[242] Minzloff 1863, p. 299,4232–4234; on the language of Brother Hans, see De Grauwe 1989.

[243] Ed. Wüst 1909; for a brief treatment, see Neumann 1985.

[244] *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae* […] *Opera omnia* 1898: the *Vitis mystica* appears on pp. 159–229; the Additamentum IV comprises pp. 192–216.

[245] Schneider 1987a, vol. 1, pp. 258–260 and vol. 2 fig. 159.

Die drei Blumen des Paradieses [The three flowers of paradise], *Der dreifache Schmuck der seligen Jungfrauen* [The tripartite adornment of the Holy Virgin], *Das himmlische Gastmahl* [The heavenly supper] and *Warnung vor der Sünde* [Warning against sin].[246] These poems, too, are irrefutably aimed at a female audience, though they address both lay and religious women. The poems make full use of mystical and allegorical themes that were so popular in the Rhineland during the thirteenth century.

> The four poems were written by the same that wrote *Die Lilie* in the Wiesbaden manuscript. It is dated between 1270 and 1290 (see above), but it is assumed that the poems are somewhat older, namely ca. 1250. The language of the manuscript is Middle Frankish, though the original Rhine Frankish is still discernible.[247]

A second work known to have been written by the author of *Die Lilie* was previously titled *Die Rede von den fünfzehn Graden*. Kurt Ruh proposed to refer to this text henceforth as the *Buch der Minne*, a proposal that has found wide acceptance.[248] The *Buch der Minne* has a two-fold structure. In the first part, the meaning of God to the human soul is explicated on the basis of an allegorisation of thirteen biblical professions (shepherd, merchant), offices (king) or 'states' (brother, bridegroom). The highest, eleventh level is represented by the bridegroom, who explains to the soul that he must let go of flesh and pursue the spirit. The author thus creates a logical segue to the second part of his text, in which he explicates a mystical doctrine based on the Song of Songs. Using what appear to be randomly chosen verses from the beginning of the *Canticum canticorum*, he distinguishes between fifteen stages or levels that the soul must ascend in order ultimately to experience the divine intercourse. This daring theme allows us to situate the *Buch der Minne* in the mystical literature of the thirteenth century. It is worth noting that the citizen from Magdeburg(?) Brun von Schönebeck used the same remarkable fifteen-step 'Aufstiegschema' [transcending pattern] for his *Hohe Lied* of ca. 1276.[249]

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[246] Ed. Wüst 1909, pp. 64–74; cf. Neumann 1985, pp. 830–831.

[247] Neumann 1985, p. 830.

[248] Ed. Dolfel 1861 (fragmentary); for more on the text see Honemann 1989 and Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, pp. 233–244. Honemann 1989 still referred to the *Rede von den fünfzehn Graden*, but even he now accepts the title *Das Buch der Minne* (brief 11–8–2001); Prof. V. Honemann (Münster) is currently preparing a new edition of this text.

[249] On Brun see Wolff 1978.

> The oldest manuscript containing the *Buch der Minne* (Prague, Museum of National Literature, Strahov, cod. DG IV 17), dates to the early fourteenth century. The language is Middle Frankish, which would agree nicely with the provenance of the religious community Kamp near Boppard in the bishopric of Trier, which incidentally was not founded until 1387.[250] The German transmission includes another Middle Low German manuscript, Bonn, Universitätsbibliothek, S 2060, dating to the end of the fifteenth century; this contains only the second half of the text, the fifteen stages proper.[251]

There is a Middle Dutch translation of the *Buch der Minne*, and it need not be much younger than the original. The *Boec der minnen*—we have its editor, J.M. Willeumier-Schalij, to thank for this title—is preserved in a manuscript that supposedly dates from the last quarter of the thirteenth century (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 73 G 30; fig. 8).[252] Together with manuscript H of the *Limburg sermons* this codex represents the oldest, thirteenth-century survival of Middle Dutch religious prose. Although the transmission of the *Boec der minnen* is considerably older and richer that that of the Middle Frankish text, there is hardly any cause to doubt that the *Buch der Minnen* was originally a work from the Lower Rhine region. The author himself refers to *Die Lilie* as an earlier work of his: *van dat haven wir inder lilien volichere gesprachen* [we have spoken in more detail about this in *Die Lilie*].[253] And a Lower Rhine origin for that text is practically certain. There are moreover internal reasons for attributing both texts to one and the same author, not least of which is their common use of the *Vitis mystica* as source. This otherwise unknown author appears as well to have made use of the *Rheinische Marienlob*.[254]

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[250] On ms. Prague, see Schoemann 1930, pp. 4–6, Willeumier-Schalij 1946, CXII and Honemann 1989, p. 1062.

[251] Over ms. Bonn See Schoemann 1930, 8 and Honemann 1992, 1062.

[252] Ed. Willeumier-Schalij 1946; cf. Honemann 1989 and Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 233–235.

[253] Prague, Museum of National Literature, Strahov, cod. DG IV 17, f. 42v (toward the end of the discussion of the second stage); cf. Honemann 1989, p. 1062. I thank Prof. V. Honemann (Münster) for providing me with a Xerox copy of the Prague manuscript.

[254] On the sources of the *Buch der Minne* see Schoemann 1930, pp. 28–54 and Willeumier-Schalij 1946, who provides an overview of citations from Latin and MHG sources on pp. LXIII–LXXVII. Both of the aforementioned authors refer to the *Rheinische Marienlob* under the title *Marienlieder*, as was the case in the old edition by Grimm 1856. The more recent edition, Bach 1909, was apparently unknown to both. Grimm's edition is more accurate than Bach's, who intervened excessively in the text of his exemplar.

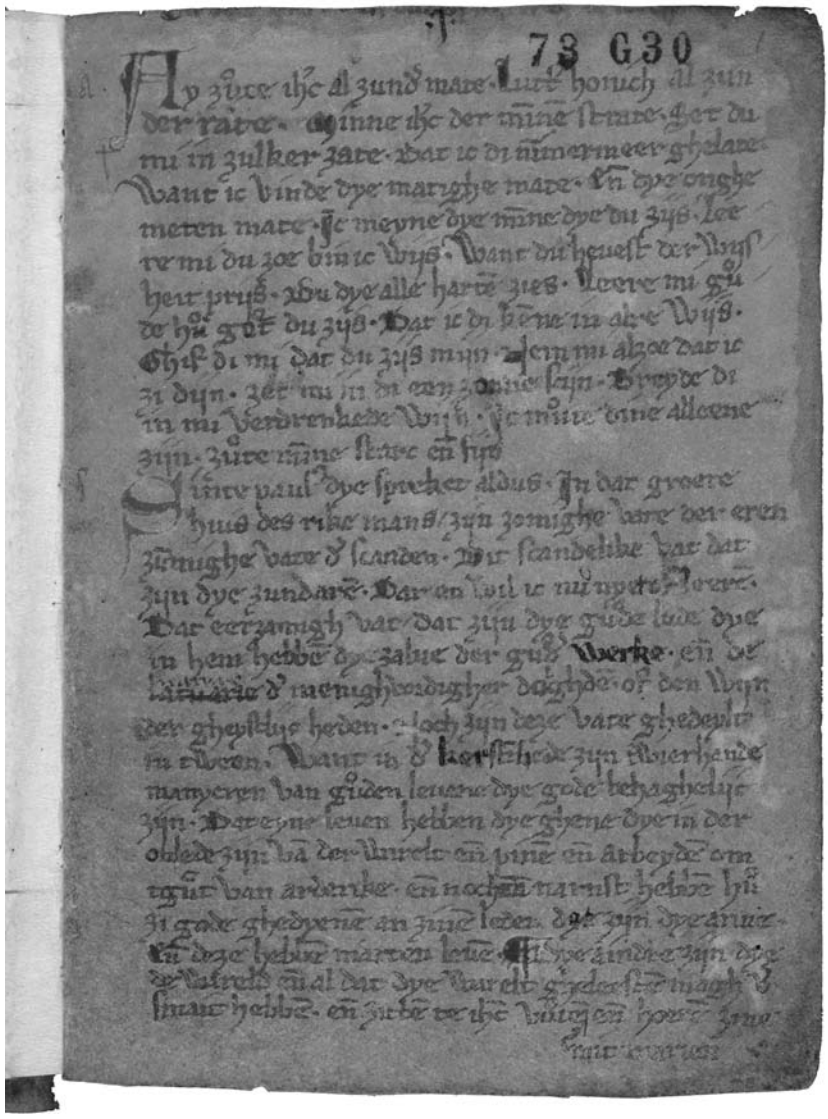

Fig. 8. MS The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 73 G 30, f. 1r. Opening page of the *Boec der minnen*.

It would seem, then, that there existed a more or less coherent body of Lower Rhine religious literature in the thirteenth century.

> According to Willem de Vreese, Ms. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 73 G 30, containing the *Boec der minnen*, should be dated to the last years of the thirteenth century.[255] The manuscript comes from the rich collection of the convent Sint-Johannes Evangelist (Oude Hof) in Weesp (Holland), which is first mentioned in the written record in 1397 and was admitted to the Third Order of Francis in 1399.[256] The manuscript is thus considerably older than the convent that possessed it. The language of the *Boec der minnen* might well provide good evidence for localising the manuscript, but it appears that definitive statements on this issue are difficult to make. Despite its predominantly western character—which jibes well with its provenance of Weesp in Holland—a considerable number of typically eastern words may be discerned.[257] These could easily have been adopted from the original Middle Frankish original. A second complete manuscript containing the *Boec der minnen* is Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. germ. quart. 1084, f. 72r–122v, compiled among the female canons regular of Nazareth near Geldern.[258] The text is preserved fragmentarily in two Tauler-manuscripts, namely Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Ltk. 327, f. 32r–35r (ca. 1490, Brabant?) and Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 966, f. 81v–83r (ca. 1500) by the female canons regular from Oostmalle.[259]

According to Seidel, then, the literary-historical context in which the *St. Georgen sermons* were probably compiled is determined by a relatively small group of disparate texts and manuscripts. This group includes both 'Andachtsbücher' [books of contemplation], with only a few inscriptions in German, and extensive treatises concerning the religious life, as well as straightforward prose works alongside splendidly composed rhyming texts. One of the characteristics that links all of the texts in this group is that almost all of them can be localised to the Rhine river basin. Moreover, despite their individual differences, a number of constants with regard to form and content may be discerned. The adoration of Mary surpasses almost that of Christ, of whom primarily his love

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[255] De Vreese 1962b, p. 145; in his analysis of thirteenth-century Middle Dutch manuscripts, Kienhorst 1999, 53 aligns himself with De Vreese's dating.

[256] On this convent see Goudriaan 1998, pp. 244 and 249 (nr. 157).

[257] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, CXIV–CXXXII.

[258] Described in De Vreese 1900–1902, pp. 123–130 (M^5); cf. Costard 1992, p. 204.

[259] On the Leiden ms. see Lieftinck 1936, pp. 48–56 and 361–363 (edition); on the Ghent ms. see Lieftinck 1936, pp. 57–64 and 430–432 (variants to the edition on pp. 361–363) and Stooker & Verbeij 1997, vol. 2, no. 986.

(*minne*) and humanity are offered as an example for the reader. The texts frequently assume a deeply emotional tone, in particular when it concerns the suffering of Christ and Mary. In terms of form, the strong predilection for series or lists, and a fondness for allegory spring to mind. Botanical and other natural imagery are favourites, though precious gems and jewellery appear to be appropriate concrete points of departure for a religious lesson.

It can hardly be doubted that most of these literary works were composed in the context of the *cura monialium*, whereby male members of clergy provided material for reading and meditation to female religious. A direct link with the Dominicans and the Franciscans cannot be established, but whether these texts can be attributed exclusively to the Cistercians also remains the question. It is wiser not to draw the boundaries all too sharply. Two of the three aforementioned 'Andachtsbücher' may be attributed to Cistercian houses, though the role of the vernacular in them is marginal. For *Die heilige Regel* a Cistercian origin is as good as certain, but a certain amount of doubt surrounds the origin of the *St. Georgen sermons*. The three big Lower Rhine texts, the *Rheinische Marienlob*, *Die Lilie* and the *Buch der Minne* can be linked only tenuously, if at all, to one of the monastic orders. It is unlikely that the author of the *Marienlob*, who calls himself an *unwirdich prister* [unworthy priest], will have been a Cistercian monk. The epithet 'brother' or 'monk' would have been much more appropriate for a monastic context. This is not to deny that the *Marienlob*, *Die Lilie* and the *Buch der Minne* are thoroughly leavened with a brand of spirituality frequently associated with the Cistercians. The Middle Dutch *Boec der minnen* confirms this impression, not in the last place with the statement: *Mijn gheleyde zal wezen God ende zinte Barnard* [my guides will be God and St. Bernard].[260]

> One small codicological observation: the format of the 'Andachtsbücher' and several other of the thirteenth-century manuscripts mentioned here is often very small. The *Lilienfelder Andachtsbuch* measures 165 × 110 mm and the *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* 160 × 110 mm.[261] Ms. Wiesbaden, Hessische Landesbibliothek, 68 containing the *Die Lilie* and four other poems is ca. 105 × 80 mm and ms. Hanover, Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, I 81, containing the *Rheinische Marienlob*, weighs in at ca. 119 × 84 mm. Schneider mentions ms. Gießen, Universitätsbibliothek, 876 as well in this context, which contains the somewhat related texts *Salomonis Haus*, *Marien*

[260] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, p. 61,16–17.
[261] Cf. Klemm 1978 34 and 30, respectively.

Himmelfahrt and *Der Sünden Widerstreit*: it measures ca. 112 × 72 mm.[262] Ms. London, British Library, Add. 9048, containing *Die heilige Regel*, is also fairly small: 159 × 117 mm.[263] The small format may be readily explained by these manuscripts' most important function: they served to assist in personal meditation of female religious in a private context.[264]

In most of these Rhineland compositions from the thirteenth century, Bernard of Clairvaux is cited and paraphrased frequently and approvingly. Together with his contemporary and fellow member of the order, William of Saint-Thierry, he was the great designer of Cistercian mystical theology. Additionally, regular influence may be discerned from Hugh and Richard of St. Victor, the great mystical theologians from the eponymous abbey of canons regular near Paris. The Cistercians and the Victorines are the standard-bearers of what Kurt Ruh calls 'die Mönchstheologie des 12. Jahrhunderts,' [the monastic theology of the twelfth century] which constitutes one of the main currents of the history of western European mysticism.[265] This tradition is readily observable in the *Buch der Minne*. Its anonymous author had not only read the works of Bernard of Clairvaux, but made use here and there of the mystic theology of Richard of St. Victor.[266] Other, more recent influences may be identified, as well. This author was also familiar with Franciscan mysticism: after all, the *Vitis mystica* was an important source for both the *Buch der Minne* and the *Die Lilie*. Thus the author of the *Buch der Minne* confronts us with a nettlesome problem of definition. Cistercians like Bernard of Clairvaux devoted a great deal of attention to emotional descriptions of the suffering of Christ and of Mary's feelings at the foot of the Cross, but we cannot speak here of a purely Cistercian spirituality. A Benedictine like Anselm of Canterbury (†1109) had already stressed Christ's humanity in his enormously influential

[262] On the Gießen ms. see Schneider 1987a, vol. 1, pp. 257–260 and fig. 157 and 158. NB: the measurements presented here were derived from a full-scale photograph printed in Schneider 1987a, vol. 2.

[263] Cf. Priebsch 1909, VI and the figure in the back of the book.

[264] Schneider 1987a, vol. 1, 259: 'Auch sie [ms. Wiesbaden, LB, 68, with *Die Lilie* and the four poems] gehört zum Typ des Kleinstformatigen Andachtsbücher, die als Frauenlektüre denkbar sind' [It, too, belongs to the category of pocket-sized prayer books so typical of reading material for women]; cf. also Palmer 1993, p. 14, on old vernacular manuscripts in German.

[265] Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 1.

[266] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, LXIII–LXVII cites various allusions to works by Richard, in particular the *Explicatio in Cantica canticorum* (now no longer attributed to him) and *Benjamin major* (now referred to as the *Mystical ark*).

Meditationes (see § 2.4). Contemplation of the Passion would later occupy a central role among the mendicant orders, too, albeit in sometimes divergent forms. We may thus speak of an emotionally laden monastic spirituality, which had developed over the course of several centuries and which may not be linked with any single monastic order.[267]

The situation became even more complicated when in the thirteenth century ever increasing numbers of women and lay folk chose the religious life. It was a natural thing for them to seek inspiration in the traditional monastic spirituality, but there arose as a matter of course all manner of specific adaptations. The great historian of western mysticism, Bernard McGinn, employs the term 'vernacular theology' for the religious literature that begins to flourish in the thirteenth century and that resulted from the encounter between learned clerics and the ever more numerous lay folk who took up the religious life, especially women. The result of this clash—McGinn speaks of a 'conversation'—is a multicoloured literature, and one that did not necessarily have to be practiced in the vernacular. Elements of the ancient, elitist monastic theology could here converge with the simplest of everyday themes (*sermo humilis*).[268] In their own way, each and every one of the vernacular texts from the Rhineland discussed here fit this pattern.

It appears that the differences in religious views that remained among the established orders had little if any affect upon the creation of the thirteenth-century German-language religious literature. It would seem rather that authors who worked in the context of the *cura monialium* readily allowed themselves to be influenced by a variety of movements.[269] This is readily observable in the work of Lamprecht von Regensburg, the first German-language author in the Franciscan tradition, who has two works to his name.[270] *Sanct Francisken Leben* (ca. 1238) is a faithful translation of the oldest *vita* of St. Francis, written by Thomas of Celano, a work of undeniable Franciscan pedigree. His second work, *Tochter Syon*, which must have been composed ca. 1250, is also a translation in verse of a Latin source, the *Filia Sion a deo aversa*. The texts fits

[267] For a brief treatment, see Gerhardt & Palmer 2002, pp. 48–49; an extended survey of the Latin contemplations of the Passion is provided by Bestul 1996, pp. 26–68.

[268] McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, especially pp. 19–20.

[269] In this context we are reminded of what Williams-Krapp (1986–1987, especially pp. 49–50) says about the origins of reform literature in the fifteenth century: reform-minded monasteries from various orders worked together to expand their libraries.

[270] Ed. Weinhold 1880, pp. 53–260 (*Sanct Francisken Leben*) and 306–544 (*Tochter Syon*), respectively; for a brief treatment of Lamprecht, see Heinzle 1985.

well into the tradition of the Bernardine bridal mysticism. *Tochter Syon* is a dramatic allegory on the soul that is wounded from within and wonders who can have inflicted that wound. With the assistance of the ladies Cognitio, Spes, Fides, Sapientia and Caritas, the soul discovers that the King himself is the perpetrator. Caritas pierces the heart of the king and fills a glass with the honey of sweetness that flows from the wound. The suffering soul is cured by this medicine. The allegorizing method and the theme of *minne* developed in the *Tochter Syon* are reminiscent of monastic mystic theology. Form and content are equally reminiscent of some of the Rhineland texts that were discussed earlier and that must ultimately be linked to the Cistercian order. And yet this is a work of undeniably Franciscan origin. Lamprecht von Regensburg says that he learned the subject matter from the daughters of Sion via his parochial minister brother Gerard (he held that office 1246–1252). The Bavarian Franciscans apparently had no scruples about taking texts from the monastic theological tradition and adapting them to their own ends.

> During the Middle Ages a number of different versions of texts about the daughter of Sion were in circulation, in Latin, German and Dutch.[271] Lamprecht's *Tochter Syon* belongs to the W-redaction, which together with Z represents the oldest stage of transmission. Lamprecht's work date to ca. 1250. The only manuscript in which his two works are preserved (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 1997) dates, however, to the fourteenth century. The two oldest, thirteenth-century Latin manuscripts in this tradition belong to the Z redaction. They both come from the southern Netherlands, namely from the Cistercian abbey of Ter Duinen (near Koksijde, Flanders) and from the private collection of the canon regular Simon van Tongeren, who joined the Benedictines of Saint-Jacques in Liège toward the end of the century.[272] The manuscript from Ter Duinen attributes the text, under the title *De languore anime amatis*, to a certain *Guerric abbas*, which must be a reference to a Cistercian monk from Tournai (Doornik) and friend of Bernard, Guerric d'Igny.[273] De Wilde, who edited Guerric's text, was of the opinion that this brief text on the daughter of Sion was not speculative enough to be the work of the abbot from the southern Low Countries (though if Guerric wrote

[271] See Schmidtke 1995 for an overview. On the Middle Dutch prose translation, see Willeumier-Schalij 1950, who also provides an edition. Van Mierlo 1941 provides a facsimile of an incunable of *Vander dochtere van Syon* (Gheraert Leeu, Antwerpen, 1492).

[272] The ms. from Ter Duinen is Bruges, Bibliotheek van de Groot Seminarie, 88/170; the ms. of Simon van Tongeren is Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, 2777 (Staub & Knaus 1979, pp. 270–277 (no. 172)).

[273] Ed. De Wilde 1935, pp. 189–196; cf. Reypens 1943.

his text with a female audience in mind, his argument is considerably weakened). Nevertheless, both the attribution to Guerric and the oldest Latin witness (to the Z tradition) point to the Netherlands.

The case of Lamprecht von Regensburg shows that it was possible for Franciscan spirituality and more traditional monastic theology to exist side-by-side in the burgeoning vernacular religious literature of the thirteenth century. Moreover, the *Tochter Syon* shows that suitable texts could be disseminated over great distances and beyond the boundaries of the orders themselves without any difficulty whatsoever. In all likelihood, the Latin exemplar will have originated in a Cistercian context in the Netherlands. There is no trace whatsoever of an early Middle Dutch translation of the *Filia Sion*, and yet as early as 1250 a German version had been composed in far-off Bavaria, in the context of a fairly rich corpus of Franciscan literature.[274] This suggests that literary relations were somewhat different in the Netherlands than in Bavaria or the Rhineland. It is time to explore the geographical region and the intellectual milieu in which the *Limburg sermons* must have been composed.

1.5 *The Historical Context*

Lamprecht von Regensburg's *Tochter Syon* is today known especially for the following quotation concerning the 'art' that gives women a deeper knowledge of God:

> Diu kunst ist bî unser tagen
> in Brâbant und in Baierlanden
> undern wiben ûf gestanden.
> Herre got, waz kunst ist daz,
> daz sich ein alt wip baz
> verstêt dan witzige man?[275]
>
> [This knowledge has in our days/ In Brabant and Bavaria/ Risen up among women./ Lord God, what kind of knowledge is it/ that an old woman knows it better/ Than a learned man?]

[274] Willeumier-Schalij 1950, 23, does not discount the possibility that the Middle Dutch textual history goes back as far as the thirteenth century, but all known manuscripts date to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (cf. Schmidtke 1995, pp. 958–959).

[275] Weinhold 1880, p. 431,2838–2843; transl. McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, p. 174.

Whether he is here being sarcastic or serious, the fact is that ca. 1250 Lamprecht knew that a mystic women's movement had emerged in the Netherlands, in Brabant, to be precise.[276] How could he have learned about it? Jacques de Vitry (†1240) is the figure who built a bridge between the apostolic poverty movement in Italy and the religious movement that had emerged in the southern Netherlands. In all likelihood Jacques met Francis of Assisi (†1226) personally during his travels to Italy, given his particular interest in reform movements. The oldest Franciscan hagiography (Thomas of Celano, *Speculum perfectionis*) mentions an unrealised plan of Francis to cross the Alps to 'Francia,' because there was such devotional fervour there for Christ's body and blood.[277] This is undoubtedly a reference to the current Belgian portion of Francia, where there was especially among women a sincere adoration of the Eucharistic miracle of transubstantiation. Thus the fame of the southern Netherlandic religious women's movement was well known among Franciscan circles at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Those who did not learn about these women directly from Jacques de Vitry or others could read about them in the *Historia occidentalis* (written in 1221 or thereafter), in which Jacques describes and condemns numerous reform movements of his day from his own observation.[278] This movement would appear to present the ideal conditions for the compilation of the *Limburg sermons*, but we desire a more precise determination of place, time and milieu.

In the region that generally corresponds with the territory comprising the bishopric of Liège and the duchy of Brabant, a new reform movement manifested itself around 1180 in which, for the first time in history, women played a central role. Before long the fire of this movement spread to such neighbouring provinces as Hainaut, Flanders and Artois, until practically all of the southern Netherlands was part of the scene of action.[279] Of all the numerous female religious who emerged

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[276] It is usually assumed that Lamprecht admired the female religious and their piety, but McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, p. 174 proffers yet again the possibility of an ironic reading. But given the fact that in both the *Sanct Francisken Leben* (Weinhold 1880, p. 168,3272–74) and in the *Tochter Syon* (Weinhold 1880, p. 438,3011–14) Lamprecht explicitly laments the fact that he himself is not mystically gifted, I prefer the first reading (cf. Heinzle 1985, p. 523).

[277] Cf. McDonnell 1954, p. 313 and the sources and bibliography listed there.

[278] Ed. Hinnebusch 1972.

[279] Recent overviews of the Liège-Brabant (women's) movement and it mystical spirituality are to be found in Dinzelbacher 1994, pp. 199–208, Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, pp. 81–110, McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, pp. 158–166. See further the collection edited

in this period, it was the Beguines who have always received the greatest amount of attention, mostly due to their unusual and controversial semi-religious lifestyle.[280] Although the history of the Beguines has been surrounded by myth almost from their inception (see § 4.4), it is certain that their base was to be found primarily in the bishopric of Liège. In the period 1180–1230 four centres of Beguine activity may be identified, namely the city of Huy, Nivelles and Oignies, the city of Liège and the triangle Borgloon, Sint-Truiden and Zoutleeuw.[281] Liège would ultimately emerge as the centre of Beguine activity in the region: toward the end of the thirteenth century there were a couple of dozen beguinages comprising many more than a thousand Beguines.[282] These are numbers approached only by Cologne. It should be noted that it was a very early practice in the Netherlands to place the numerous Beguines in beguinages whenever possible, a practice that made for better regulation of their religious lifestyle and helped prevent heterodox excrescences. Local aristocrats, among whom we can name Johanna (†1244) and Margaretha (†1280) of Constantinople, Duchesses of Flanders and Hainaut, were instrumental in promoting the foundation of beguinages in their territories.[283]

The religious women's movement was by no means restricted to the Beguines. There were also women who led the contemplative life separated from the world as anchoresses (Eva de Saint-Marie, Ivetta of Huy), whereas others devoted themselves to serving their fellow humans in the first hospitals and leprosaria, which were founded during this period (Mary of Oignies, Juliana of Mont-Cornillon and Ivetta of Huy, before they had themselves enclosed). Nor did this religious enthusiasm go unnoticed by the Cistercian order: between 1181 and 1251 no fewer than 66 new Cistercian convents were founded in the

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by Dor, Johnson & Wogan-Browne 1999, in which Wogan-Browne & Henneau 1999 provide a handy introduction, while Bolton 1999 considers to what extent the Low Countries constitute an exception within the European context.

[280] For more on the Beguines in the southern Netherlands see now Simons 2001; older studies of this subject include Greven 1911, Philippen 1918, Mens 1947 and McDonnell 1954.

[281] Cf. Simons 2001, pp. 39–40.

[282] Only the most famous beguinage in Liège, Saint-Christophe, boasted some 1000 inhabitants as early as 1254 (Simons 2001, 59 (Table 2)); it is difficult to determine the number of beguinages and houses in Liège, let alone estimate the number of beguines who lived there (cf. Simons 2001, p. 284 (61B)).

[283] On Johanna and Margaretha of Flanders as patrons of nuns and beguines, see Luykx 1943 and Luykx 1946, 310–318 (both on Johanna), McDonnell 1954, pp. 111–112, Oliver 1994, p. 254 n. 47 and Simons 2001, p. 105.

southern Netherlands—following which it would be centuries before any new convents were (re)founded.[284] It is noteworthy that in this region the newly founded beguinages were remarkably often situated in the vicinity of a Cistercian convent; we have already seen how in the German-speaking areas connections were sought with the mendicant orders (§1.4). That the Beguines in the Liège-Brabant area so often lived in proximity to the Cistercian nuns suggests that their unaffiliated lifestyle was primarily a practical matter, and not one of principle. The monastic orders recruited almost exclusively among the nobility and the patriciate, whereas most women who chose the Beguines way of life belonged to the lower echelons of society. For them, a place in a nunnery was as good as unattainable, but a life as a Beguine was well within their possibilities.[285]

The abbey of Villers-en-Brabant (in the French-speaking portion of the duchy), founded in 1146 under the auspices of Bernard of Clairvaux himself, constitutes one of the driving forces behind the Cistercian women's movement in this area.[286] The oldest Cistercian nunnery on Brabantine soil, it experienced a great period of flourishing especially in the thirteenth century. In this, its heyday, the abbey was inhabited by no fewer than four hundred monks and lay brothers. During its golden age, Villers produced several saints, whose spiritual feats are amply recorded in the extensive historiographical tradition of the monastery.[287] The Brabantine abbey exerted an important influence on the mystical piety that was practiced in the female houses. Of the first eight abbots, seven appear to have been active in the area of *cura monialium*.[288] They did not limit their efforts to Cistercian nunneries; Villers also made a significant contribution to beguinages, such as the

[284] For the Belgian Cistercian convents, see, among others, Canivez 1926, De Ganck 1999a, De Ganck 1999b, De Ganck 1999c and Goossens 1994–1995, p. 3–7 (with charts). Further information on individual convents in present-day Belgium is to be found in the relevant articles in the *Monasticon belge* (*MB*).

[285] Cf. Goossens 1994–1995, pp. 8–9 and Simons 2001, pp. 109–111.

[286] For more on this monastery, see among others monographs by Nimal 1896 and De Moreau 1909 and, more recently, *MB* IV-2, pp. 341–405. On the cultural climate during the period 1197–1248, the Golden Age of Villers, see Falmagne 2001, based on the example of the *Flores paradysii*. The booklist from 1309 published in Derolez 2001, no. 88 (pp. 213–226) gives an idea of the enormous wealth of the library of Villers.

[287] Cf. Roisin 1947, pp. 23–46.

[288] On the abbots of Villers and their involvement with the female monasteries, see De Moreau 1909, pp. 51–114 and *MB* IV-2, pp. 341–405; see e.g. also Roisin 1943 and Goossens 1994–1995, pp. 3–7.

ones in the nearby towns of Nivelles and Oignies.[289] Axters considers Villers to be the centre of mystical spirituality, as opposed to the other large Cistercian abbey in the southern Netherlands, Ter Duinen, which developed more into a centre of study and scholastic learning.[290]

In the Duchy of Brabant and the bishopric of Liège—which is divided by the Romance-German language border—the basic requirements were in place in the thirteenth century for the genesis of a corpus of religious literature in the vernacular. There was a constant supply of often highly motivated women who lived an intense spiritual life. Although no doubt there were those among them who possessed a thorough command of Latin, we must assume that most of them were not especially well versed in the language. On the other hand, it was not at all unusual in this area for girls to receive a good education, even if they did not come from noble families.[291] We may assume, then, that many of the female religious from this area were to a certain degree literate. There were also many religious in the southern Netherlands who exerted themselves to channel this explosion of female spirituality onto the right track. It goes without saying that the Cistercians, with Villers leading the way, saw to the needs especially of their own numerous female members. Supervision of the Beguines came devolved to a number of different religious institutions. In Flanders and Hainaut the Dominicans were prominent—they were the ones who vigorously promoted placing Beguines in separate beguinages—but in Brabant the Cistercians were also active in this regard (especially Villers and Sint-Bernardus opt Schelt near Antwerp).[292] In the bishopric of Liège, canon Reinier van Tongeren—a secular canon—performed a great deal of pastoral work among the Beguines, while in the County of Looz, abbot Willem van Rijkel of the Benedictine abbey of Sint-Truiden was responsible for the foundation of a beguinage in that same town in 1258.[293]

There was, then, a elite group of clergymen involved in the *cura monialium* of the women's religious movement in Liège and Brabant. The conditions for the compilation of a collection of texts like the *Limburg*

[289] On Villers and the beguines, see Simons 2001, pp. 46–47.
[290] Axters 1950–1960, vol. 1, pp. 179–193 (p. 193); for more on Ter Duinen, see *MB* III-2, pp. 353–478.
[291] Cf. Simons 2001, pp. 6–7.
[292] For Sint-Bernardus opt Schelt see *MB* VIII-1, pp. 31–79.
[293] The examples cited here are taken from Simons 2001, 113 and 105, respectively.

sermons appear to have been favourable. But in how far did the coming together of enthusiastic but relatively unschooled women and reform-minded clerics—this 'conversation,' as McGinn puts it—indeed lead to the creation of a particular religious literature in the vernacular?[294] By far the best known accomplishment achieved by male religious here was not the creation of a vernacular literature, but rather of a new one in Latin. Life histories were written of no fewer than fourteen women who were involved in the women's religious movement in Liège-Brabant, either as conventual nun, or Beguine, or in some other capacity: Mary of Oignies (†1213), Odilia of Liège (†1220), Ivetta of Huy (†1228), Christina the Astonishing of Sint-Truiden (†1228), Ida of Nivelles (†1231), Ida of Leuven († after 1231), Margaret of Ypres (†1234), Lutgard of Tongeren (1182–1246), Aleid of Schaarbeek (†1250), Juliana of Mont-Cornillon (†1259), Beatrice of Nazareth (ca. 1200–1268), Ida of Gorsleeuw (†1262 or later), Elisabeth of Spalbeek († after 1278) and the somewhat eccentric Catharine of Leuven, a famous Jew who took the veil in Vrouwenpark near Leuven.[295] All of these *vitae* were written by male clergy who in one way or another were involved in the pastoral care of such female religious.

Jacques de Vitry may be regarded as the founder of this remarkable literary genre, which has been largely responsible for the fame of the *mulieres religiosae* from Liège-Brabant. Probably born in Vitry-en-Perthois, near Reims, the talented Jaques went to Paris to study at the university, where Peter Cantor may have been one of his teachers. During a visit to Liège, the young cleric was deeply impressed by the new affective piety

[294] McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, p. 17.

[295] For further bibliographic information on these biographies, see the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* (*BHL*): Mary of Oignies (pp. 5516–5517), Odilia of Liège (6276), Ivetta of Huy (4620), Christina the Astonishing (1746–47), Ida of Nivelles (4146–47), Ida of Leuven (4145), Lutgard of Tongeren (4950), Aleid of Schaarbeek (264), Juliana of Mont-Cornillon (4521), Margaret of Ypres (5319), Beatrice of Nazareth (1062), Ida of Gorsleeuw (4144), Elisabeth of Spalbeek (2484) and Catharine of Leuven (256); for further bibliographic information, see also Opitz 1985, pp. 14–30 (where most of these *vitae* are mentioned), Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, pp. 83–84 and the bibliography in King 1998. Most of these *vitae* have been published in the *Acta Sanctorum* (*AASS*), though there are more recent and better editions of some of them, which I naturally prefer to use in this study; I cite the *vita* of Ida of Nivelles from Henriquez 1630, who published her life along with those of four other Cistercian nuns (Beatrice, Aleid, Ida of Leuven, Ida of Gorsleeuw) from what is now Belgium. I have also made grateful use of the numerous modern translations with introductions that are currently available for these texts (cf. Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, p. 84; for an overview of translations in English, see Oliver 1994, p. 249 n. 7).

manifested in the region, especially among women.[296] He was struck in particular by Mary of Oignies (1177–1213). This wealthy woman was separated from her husband John, so that both of them could live in chastity. Mary lived in a small house near the monastery of canons regular at Saint-Nicolas in Oignies on the Sambre, from whom she received spiritual guidance. In 1210 Jacques de Vitry entered the same Augustine priory, whereby he was able to enter into a close relationship with Mary. Whereas by virtue of his office Jacques provided Mary with pastoral care, Mary taught the eager priest a great deal from the book of Life. After Mary's death, Jacques went into the world to pursue a career in the Church, which would lead to his becoming Bishop of Acco (in the Holy Land) and Tusculum. Even after he had become cardinal, Jacques regularly returned to the bishopric of Liège for new inspiration. He personally dedicated the new church in his former priory of Saint-Nicolas in Oignies and provide it with treasures and relics he had collected on his travels.[297]

When Mary died in 1213, her pastor and disciple set about writing her life story: the *Vita Mariae Oigniacensis*.[298] Although he naturally followed hagiographic tradition in writing his *vita*, Jacques had something other than a 'normal' Saint's Life in mind. His work is dedicated to Bishop Fulco of Toulouse, who had been driven from his see by the Cathars. Due to the favourable reputation the pious folk from Liège enjoyed even in southern France, Fulco had gone north to ask for help in his struggle against the heretics. Apparently Jacques intended to use the life of Mary of Oignies as a weapon in this battle. She had been, after all, the living example of a reforming manner of religious life that did not transgress the boundaries of orthodoxy.

But there is more to the *Vita Mariae Oigniacensis*. The text can also be read as an introduction to the mystical theology of Richard of St. Victor.[299] (Like Jacques de Vitry, Richard was an Augustine canon-regular;

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[296] McDonnell 1954, pp. 20–39 maintains that Jacques received his religious training in Liège.

[297] Biographical accounts of Jacques de Vitry may be found in Hinnebusch 1972, pp. 3–7 and Sandor 1993, pp. 53–55; for more bibliography, see Simons 2001, p. 171 n. 14.

[298] In *AASS*, Jun. IV (23 June), the *Vita Mariae Oigniacensis* comprises pp. 630–684; the text of Jacques the Vitry is found on pp. 636–666. Modern translations of this *vita* are Vankenne 1989 (French) and King & Feiss 1999, pp. 37–199.

[299] Marsolais 1999; this is a summary of: Miriam Marsolais, *Marie d'Oignies: Jacques de Vitry's* Exemplum *of an Ideal Victorine Mystic* (unpublished MA thesis). The vision of Marsolais corresponds *mutatis mutandis* with what Ringler 1980, pp. 4–15 observes about

in the *Historia occidentalis* Jacques lavishes high praise on the Parisian monastery of St. Victor and its learned monks). Richard developed a systematic theology of contemplation, which is laid out especially in the great allegorical treatises *The Twelve Patriarchs* and *The Mystical Ark* (better known traditionally as *Benjamin minor* and *Benjamin major*, respectively).[300] In *The Twelve Patriarchs*, the ascetic virtues that prepare the soul for contemplation are associated with the children of the patriarch Jacob. Benjamin, the youngest son of Jacobs favourite wife, Rachel, epitomises of course the highest stage. *The Mystical Ark* distinguishes six levels of contemplation, each linked to one of three types of *modi*. In the *Vita Maria Oigniacensis* Richard presents an ascending list of contemplative virtues, which are related to moments from Mary's life story. The question is whether Jacques de Vitry would have chosen this theme if he had opted to combat the Cathars on his own in Toulouse. Apparently he also wanted to simplify and concretize Richard's mystical theology for a larger audience of interested persons. We may assume that he may also have been thinking of the female religious themselves in this regard.

With the *Vita Mariae Oigniacensis*, a theologically-based model for the perfect religious life for a woman, Jacques de Vitry laid the foundation for a corpus of Saints' Lives from Liège-Brabant that has no equal among the reform movements of his day. Because of this *vita*, the piety of the women of Liège and Brabant became the subject of a clerical debate which was, in part at least, conducted in writing. It is significant that around 1230 Thomas of Cantimpré (post-1201–1262) felt compelled to write a *Supplement* to the *Vita Mariae Oigniacenis*.[301] He had been converted by the preaching of Jacques de Vitry and subsequently entered into the latter's Augustine order in Cantimpré, near Cambrai. Thomas' *Supplement* of course deals with Mary of Oignies and her remarkable form of religious life, but he uses her biography to exhort Jacques to cast off the cardinal's robes and return to Liège.

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the 'Schwesternbücher' containing biographies of German Dominican nuns: the point of this genre is not to record the life-story of historical persons, but rather to set forth mystical doctrine (mystagogy), here in the form of a biography.

[300] An edition of *Benjamin minor* is found in *PL* 196, cols. 2–64, *Benjamin major* in *PL* 196, cols. 63–202; An English translation is provided by in Zinn 1979, pp. 51–147 (*Twelve Patriarchs*), and pp. 149–370 (*Mystical ark*).

[301] The *Supplementum* is published in *AASS* Jun. IV (23 June), pp. 666–678; a translation appears in King & Feiss 1999, pp. 213–261. On the life and works of Thomas see Stutvoet-Joanknecht 1990, 7*–35* and King & Feiss 1999, pp. 203–207.

His master did not, however, comply with this request. Thomas' own life took a new turn in 1232 when he left the Augustinians and entered the Dominican order in Leuven. In his years among the Dominicans he wrote three complete *vitæ* of female religious from his own region, whereby he became the most important author of this genre. One after the other he immortalized the life stories of Christina the Astonishing (1232), Margaret of Ypres (1244) and his spiritual guide Lutgard of Tongeren (1246–1248).[302]

The composition of *vitæ* concerning local religious became a widespread habit in the southern Netherlands of the thirteenth-century, and one practiced by a disparate group of clerics. As an Augustinian, the very learned Thomas of Cantimpré wrote the supplement to the life of the Beguine (?) Mary of Oignies, and as a Dominican he wrote the *vitæ* of a Benedictine (Christina), a Cistercian (Lutgard) and a Beguine (Margaret). The Premonstratensian Hugo of Floreffe composed the biography of the leper nurse and anchoress Ivetta of Huy. The contribution of Cistercian nuns in these *vitæ* is significant: Aleid of Schaarbeek, Lutgard of Tongeren, Ida of Gorsleeuw, Ida of Nivelles, Beatrice of Nazareth, Catharine of Leuven. As far as can be determined, most of these *vitae*, with the exception of the *Vita Lutgardi*, were written by male fellow members of their respective orders. The Cistercians were also responsible for writing several male lives, and not exclusively of monks. There are also *vitæ* of simple lay brothers, the most famous of which is the *Vita Arnulfi*, concerning the pious lay brother Arnulf (†1228) of Villers.[303]

This southern Netherlandic hagiographical tradition, which includes both men and women, as well as monks and nuns and Beguines and lay brethren, is unique to the thirteenth century, both in terms of size and variety. That a new literary mode, as it were, had come into existence in this region appears most clearly from the origin and transmission history of the biography of the anchoress Margaretha von Magdeburg,

[302] An edition of the *Vitae Christinae Mirabilis* appears in *AASS* Jul. V (24 July), pp. 637–660, *Vita Margaretae de Ypris* in Meersseman 1948, pp. 106–130 and *Vita Lutgardi* in *AASS* Jun. III (16 June), pp. 231–263. G. Hendrix announced plans for a new edition of the *Vita Lutgardi* as volume 2 of his series *Ontmoetingen met Lutgard van Tongeren* (Hendrix 1996–…); in volume 3 of the same series a Dutch translation of the text appeared; older versions of the *Vita Lutgardi*, among which one in Old French from a sixteenth-century manuscript, were published in Hendrix 1978a.

[303] On Cistercian hagiography from this period in general see Roisin 1947.

also known by the names Margaretha Contracta and Lame Margaret.[304] From her cell Margaret levelled such vehement criticism against the clerks of her region that she was threatened with being accused of heresy. She was therefore entered for her own safety into the Dominican convent of Magdeburg—just like her fellow citizen, the Beguine Mechthild von Magdeburg, who for similar reasons was placed among the nuns of Helfta. The author of Margaret's *vita*, the Dominican Johannes von Magdeburg, draws an explicit connection in his prologue between Margaret's piety and that of the holy women of Brabant.[305] The life of this saint from Lower Saxony may therefore be reckoned as part of the literary tradition of hagiographical literature from Brabant-Liège.[306] The transmission of the *vita* of Margaretha Contracta appears to have been an almost exclusively southern netherlandic affair. The oldest manuscript dates to ca. 1250 and originated, unsurprisingly, at the abbey of Villers.[307] Although Lower Saxony was the scene of remarkable religious initiatives—with the convent of Helfta and the city of Magdeburg as its most important centres—there apparently did not exist any particular interest in this kind of literature.

> The life of Lame Margaret is contained in a thirteenth-century compilation that is of great importance for the transmission of female *vitæ* from the Netherlands: ms. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 8609–20.[308] It hails from the library of the Cistercian convent of Ter Kameren, a 'daughter house' of Villers near to the city of Brussels. It contains the lives of Mary Magdalene, Elisabeth of Thüringen (1207–1231), Lutgard of Tongeren, Christina the Astonishing, Aleid of Schaarbeek, Ida of Gorsleeuw, as well

[304] Ed. Schmidt 1992. For Margaretha Contracta see Mulder-Bakker 1995, Mulder-Bakker 1996, Mulder-Bakker 1997a, Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, pp. 129–130 and Mulder-Bakker 2005, 148–173; on the Middle Dutch reception of Margaretha's life, see also Scheepsma 2004b.

[305] *De sapientia habuit supra omnes homines, quos ego, frater Iohannes, credo umquam oculis me vidisse, cum tamen multorum notitiam hominum habuerim in Brabantia et in diversis terris, religiosorum virorum ac feminarum religiosarum tam claustralium quam earum, que Beghine vulgariter appelantur* (ed. Schmidt 1992, pp. 92–93).

[306] Mulder-Bakker 1996, 162 suggests that as a Dominican Johannes would have been familiar with other hagiographers in his order, such as Thomas of Cantimpré and Siger of Lille, and came thus to the writing of the life of Lame Margaret.

[307] Ms. Berlin, SPK, theol.lat.qu. 195, ff. 41r–82v; for the dating, see Achten 1979, pp. 128–129.

[308] On the manuscripts see, among others, Van den Gheyn 1905, vol. 5, no. 320, *Jan van Ruusbroec* 1981, no. 4 (pp. 18–20) and Schmidt 1992, XVI. The first part of this manuscript dates to the thirteenth century (Oliver 1994, pp. 255–256 dates it even more precisely, to ca. 1250) and contains predominantly lives of holy women. The second part is from the fourteenth century and contains mostly Eucharistic texts; see further § 2.6.

as the *Ordo revelationis de gloriosis sodalibus sanctae Ursulae, Brittanicae reginae* by Elisabeth von Schönau (†1164). This collection was presumably compiled at Villers by someone who was well-versed in the hagiographical tradition and who selected texts appropriate for the nuns of Ter Kameren. He chose the favourite role-model of the Beguines from Liège-Brabant, Mary Magdalene, and further especially women from his own region—Aleid of Schaarbeek was even from Ter Kameren itself. The choice of the visions of Elisabeth von Schönau was probably in part motivated by the presence of relics of Ursula and her virgins in Ter Kameren.[309]

Just as important for the transmission of female *vitæ* is a miscellany originating in Villers itself: Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 4459–70.[310] It was compiled in 1320 at the behest of Johannes van Sint-Truiden, a monk from the famous Cistercian abbey of Park, near Leuven. The manuscript, intended for the library in Villers, gathers together a wide variety of disparate texts, whereby a common thread seems to be that they are connected in one way or another with the mystical movement of which Villers formed the centre. Among other things, the manuscript contains the lives of female religious such as Elisabeth of Thüringen, Aleid of Schaarbeek, Beatrice of Nazareth, Christina the Astonishing and Margaret of Ypres. But the lives of worthy men, such as Arnulf of Louvain, the fifth abbot of Villers, and Guerric, prior of Aulne, were included, as well.

In dealing with these *vitæ* we must always keep in mind that the male religious who wrote them had all manner of motivations for adapting them according to their own lights.[311] Nevertheless, the lives of the *mulieres religiosae* from the bishopric of Liège and the Duchy of Brabant are extremely important sources for our knowledge of the religious life in the thirteenth century, and this study draws upon them frequently. Among other things, we may deduce from these *vitae* that there existed from the very start among these female religious the habit of using the vernacular alongside Latin in their daily lives. On her deathbed in 1213, Mary of Oignies was in a constant state of ecstasy for three days,

[309] The Cologne relics of Ursula and her virgins were widely disseminated during the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, including the southern Netherlands. Monasteries that possessed relics of Ursula and her virgins usually also possessed a copy of Elisabeth von Schönau's *Ordo* (cf. Clark 1992, 144).

[310] On this ms. see Van den Gheyn 1905, no. 3161 (pp. 115–118), *Manuscrits datés conservés en Belgique* 1968, no. 34 (pp. 28–29) and figs. 101–102 and *Jan van Ruusbroec* 1981, no. 6 (pp. 22–24).

[311] Peters 1988, pp. 35–39 stresses the ambivalence of the *vitae* as cultural-historical sources. In a number of case studies Mooney 1999 describes the areas of tension between the spirituality of female religious and the written canonization thereof by male religious with their own clear agendas. See also Heene 1999, who studies the hagiographical tradition in the southern Netherlands from the perspective of gender.

whereby she amazed those observing, not least of whom was Jacques de Vitry, by praising God, Christ, Mary and the saints in a constant stream of rhythmical songs. In the course of her singing and mumbling she also revealed all manner of secrets concerning the Trinity and the unity of the Divine persons. Unfortunately, it was almost impossible for onlookers to make out what she was saying. It was clear, however, that Mary employed primarily her own native Wallonian dialect in presenting these spontaneous pious texts and songs. She kept repeating the *Magnificat*, the encomium to the Virgin Mary, in French, and time and again she repeated the *Nunc dimittis*, the encomium to Simon, for her friends, the *mulieres religiosae* of Liège, just as she had been wont to do so many times before.[312] It would of course be going too far to claim that Mary of Oignies was a poet of Old French lyrics and songs based on such predominantly unintelligible compositions produced during an ecstatic state. But this episode does illustrate the importance of the vernacular in the spiritual life of this pioneer of the female religious movement.

A somewhat more ambitious plan is revealed by the biographical sketches composed in Old French by a friend concerning the inspiring acts of Juliana of Mont-Cornillon (†1258). It has been speculated that Eve of Saint-Martin († ca. 1265) was the author; she lived in Liège as an anchoress and was indeed one of Juliana's confidants.[313] The anonymous annotations in *lingua Gallica* were incorporated by an unknown author into the *Vita beatae Julianae virginis*.[314] This text claims to present

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[312] Cf. *Tandem quasi in ultimo et insimo puncto the amicis suis, qui adhuc in mundo sunt, multa dicens: Dominoque singillatim per ordinem commendans, multas pro eis orationes ad Dominum profudit et haec omnia rithmice et lingua romana protulit* […] *Cantilenam beatae virginis, scilicet Magnificat rithmice, et lingua Romana exponendo, frequentissime replicavit, multamque suavitem et dulcedinem reperit* (*AASS* Jun. IV (23 June), 663); cf. King & Feiss 1999, pp. 142–146. See also Mens 1947, pp. 194–195 n. 263 and Goossens 1994–1995, p. 24.

[313] On Eva and her putative authorship, see Demarteau 1896; see also, however, the important qualifications by Goossens 1994–1995, p. 26, Newman 1999, p. 12 and Faesen 2000, pp. 200–204. Mulder-Bakker 2005, 83–84 has hardly any doubts about Eva's authorship.

[314] The *Vita beatae Julianae virginis* is published in *AASS* Apr. I (5 April), 435–457; Delville 1999 contains both an edition of the Latin and a French translation, while Newman 1999 provides an English translation. On the French annotations concerning Juliana's life: *Quae quidem per diligentiam unius valde religiosae personae, veluti quaedam fragmenta ne perirent, in lingua Gallica litteris commendata* (*AASS* Apr. I (5 April), 444) and *Ipso autem mihi (quem in amicorum suorum numero, quamvis indignum et immeritum, computabat) supplicante, licet rudis et indoctus, tandem aliquando adorsus sum, quod Gallice factum fuerat, vertere in Latinum. Praecipue cum ipse, nec non et aliae personae (quibus non obtemperare nefas mihi visum est, quae me ad scribendum similiter inducebant) narrationem simplicem peterent, non ornatam* (*AASS* Apr. I (5 April), 444); cf. Newman 1999, p. 27.

the official Latin *vita* of Juliana, but in the process makes a case for the beatification of Juliana's confessor John of Lausanne, canon of Saint-Martin in Liège. The central theme of the *Vita beatae Julianae virginis* is, however, the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament (Corpus Christi), which had been added to the church calendar by the efforts of Juliana, Eve of Saint-Martin, John of Lausanne and others in 1264. This constituted official recognition for the exceptional veneration of the body of Christ that the women of Liège-Brabant were practicing so enthusiastically.[315] The *vita* nevertheless provides us with a number of interesting facts about the literary significance of Juliana of Mont-Cornillon. She had immersed herself in at an early age in *scriptura latina et gallica*.[316] The *vita* subsequently refers to authors like Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux; Juliana will have read them in Latin. The question of which French works Juliana was familiar remains an open one. Nothing is known about any literary activity by Juliana of Mont-Cornillon's own hand. She was a vigorous proponent of the singing of the (Latin?) *Magnificat*, in particular by nuns and Beguines. She herself sang the encomium to Mary nine times a day, once for every month that Christ was in her womb.[317] Juliana wanted to be buried in no other place than the abbey of Villers, and her last wish was honoured.

On the Dutch side of the language boundary, too, religious women employed the new vernacular medium to deepen their spiritual lives. The literate Ida of Gorsleeuw lived in the Cistercian abbey of Rameia, in French-speaking territory, even though she herself was of Dutch extraction.[318] Like so many religious women in the Liège-Brabant

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[315] For Eucharistic piety and the Feast of the Sacrament, see § 2.6.

[316] The citation in question is found at § 3.5.

[317] *In honorem autem noven mensium, quibus virgo singularis salutis nostrae auctorem, unigenetum Dei filium, suo gestavit in utero. Canticum memoratum novies diebus singulis dicere consueverat. Personas et sibi familiares et dilectas admonebat, ut cum aliis orationibus ipsarum, toties illud diebus singulis recitarent. Dicebat enim videri sibi impossibile, ut quaevis persona in statu gratiae constituta, the quaecumque postulatione sua, ad salutem animae pertinente, non exaudiretur intercessionae Virginis gloriosae; quae gaudium ipsius, quod tunc habuit, cum in voce exultationis protulit Magnificat anima mea Dominum et quae sequuntur, eidem Virgini quotidie tot vicibus renovaret, quot mensibus Dei filium suo portavit in utero tam felici. Obsecratbatque affectuosissime Juliana, ut id ubique, et praecipue in conventibus monialium et begginarum, disseminaretur, proculdubio profectum taliter dicentium non ignorans, et omnium spiritale commodum concupiscens* (*AASS* Apr. I (5 April), 450); cf. Newman 1999, pp. 48–49.

[318] The *B. Ida Lewensi virgine* is published in *AASS* Oct. XIII, (29 October), 100–124; an English translation is found in Cawley [z.jr.]. On Ida of Gorsleeuw, see Van Steenwegen 1983.

region, the celebration of the Eucharist was of central importance to her. But Ida was sometimes propelled into such a state of ecstasy by the holy events during the Mass that she violated the strict rules of her order. She was therefore denied further access to the sacrament, which naturally came as a great disappointment to her. But fortunately God subsequently visited her every Sunday for a year in order to bring her the sweetness she had previously tasted during her celebration of the Eucharist. Out of gratitude Ida therefore wrote a poem in her own language, two lines of which are excerpted by the anonymous author of her life—apparently also a Dutch speaker—but unfortunately in Latin translation:

> Pocula quae tradunt gente Christi bona constant, sed meliora satis sunt haec quae dat Deus ipse.[319]
>
> [The cups offered by the people of Christ to each other are good, but better are those offered by God Himself]

One or two times a sentence in Dutch has been woven into the *Vita Idae de Lewis*, consistently when the communion and the state of ecstasy in which Ida received it are discussed. She was prescribed the communion as a medicine against her repeated bouts of ecstatic rapture. "*Wat sal mi Got*," [God help me] cried Ida, in an attempt to hide her joy at the prospect.[320] On another occasion she was overcome by emotion during the meal in refectory, following the celebration of the Eucharist. She cried out aloud, "*Wi, Here, min harte*," [Woe, Lord, my heart] to the great consternation of the other nuns, for the rule of silence was imposed in refectory.[321] Whereas the author of the *Vita Idae de Lewis* translates her Middle Dutch poem on the sacrament into Latin, he leaves Ida's spontaneous outbursts here unaltered. This is undoubtedly

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[319] The full citation is as follows: *Neque solummodo vice illa sponsam carissimam placuit Domino visitare, sed qualibet die dominica dulciter et divinitus ipsam per annum integrum visitavit, conferendo plenarie saporem et dulcedinem quam prius consueverat habuisse, cum corpus Domino susceppisset. Quo laeta beneficio, versus in teutonico dulcis virgo composuit, qui latino eloquio transferuntur in hunc modum: Pocula quae tradunt gente Christi bona constant; Sed meliora satis sunt haec quae dat Deus ipse* (*AASS* Oct. XIII (29 October), 113).

[320] *Quo audito, virgo laudabilis, nolens effectum animi nec suum desiderium declarari, vocibus altioribus: «Wat sal mi Got» exclamavit, religionis pretium et desiderium sanctae mentis volens iis vocibus occultari* (*AASS* Oct. XIII (29 October), p. 114).

[321] *Die quadam, in refectorio, post susceptam Eucharistiam ad mensam residens, plena Deo, flagrans odoribus, aestuans spiritu, oblita sui penitus statusque sui nescia, quod gerebat intus voce foras erectuans, loquens in teutonico dicens ita: «Wi here min harte»; quod conventus intelligens mirabatur non minime quod in refectorio loqueretur* (*AASS* Oct. XIII (29 October), p. 115).

not simply for the sake of 'local colour'; Ida's outbursts in her mother tongue underscore the emotional spirituality which according to most authors of the *vitæ* was typical for women.

Beatrice of Tienen, prioress of the Cistercian convent of Nazareth from 1236–1268, is clearly characterized in the *Vita Beatricis* as the author of vernacular writings.[322] In the prologue, the anonymous author of the *vita*—of whom it is suspected that he was the confessor for Beatrice' convent, Nazareth—maintains that he did little more than translate the notes written in Beatrice' own hand into Latin.[323] It remains uncertain whether Beatrice herself had written an autobiography in Middle Dutch, or whether her hagiographer made use of a kind of spiritual diary kept by Beatrice over the years for his *vita*. The curious situation presented itself whereby the sisters of Nazareth, to whom the *Vita Beatricis* had been dedicated, were now presented with a Latin *vita* of their dearly departed prioress, while in Nazareth itself authentic Middle Dutch writings from the hand of Beatrice were available. Apparently these were not, or no longer, deemed suitable for their purposes. The *Vita Beatricis* further reports that shortly after entering the Cistercian order in 1215, Beatrice began to record her meditation exercises. Thanks to this discovery she was able to interrupt her meditation temporarily and subsequently continue, which served to improve the quality of her prayer.[324] Further, the splendid *Van seven manieren van minnen* [*The Seven Manners of Love*] a text we also know as Ls. 42, has also been attributed to her. To what extent this is justified will be discussed in the next chapter (§ 2.8). However this may be, Beatrice of Nazareth is the first of the *mulieres religiosae* from the thirteenth century known to have written an independent text of a mystical persuasion.[325]

The aforementioned miscellany by Johannes van Sint-Truiden, dating to 1320 (Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 4459–70) provides the oldest textual witness to the *Vita Beatricis*. Embedded in the Cistercian hagiography in this manuscript from Villers there are two further texts that are based on material written by female religious from this area. In *De virgine ordinis Cisterciensis* ten visions of an anonymous Cistercian

[322] The *Vita Beatricis* is published in Reypens 1964; an English translation is to be found in De Ganck 1991, vol. 1.

[323] *Me solum huius operis translatorem existere non auctorem; quippe qui the meo parum addidi vel mutaui; sed, prout in cedulis suscepi, oblata verba vvlgaria latino <tantum> eloquio coloraui* (Ed. Reypens 1964, p. 14,32–34).

[324] Reypens 1964, p. 69,39–70,46, cited in § 3.5.

[325] Cf. McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, 166 and Scheepsma 2004a.

nun are described in abbreviated form. The Latin exhibits so many Netherlandicisms that editor Reypens decided that the visions must have been composed by a Dutch-speaking author. Where and when she lived remains a mystery, but it goes almost without saying that we should situate her somewhere in Liège-Brabant circles.[326] A similar situation obtains with the *Verbum Christi ad beginam Tungerensem*, a brief text in which a young Beguine from Tongeren describes what she has learned from a number of intimate dialogues with Christ. This, too, is a text that was in all likelihood written originally in Middle-Dutch but has been preserved only in Latin translation. The Beguine from Tongeren employed all manner of allegorical themes, such as 'the house and the heart', and 'the habit as bridal gown'. The inclusion of the *Verbum Christi* in a Cistercian miscellany suggests that this Beguine's confessor was a member of the grey order.[327] Finally, we would once again call attention to the literary work of Willem van Affligem in the *Catalogus virorum illustrium* (cited at § 1.1), who is supposed to have translated the miraculous experiences of a Cistercian nun from Dutch into Latin. If this is not a reference to the *Vita Beatricis*—the identification of Willem van Affligem, prior of Frasnes, as the author of the Copenhagen *Lutgart* renders this once again a theoretical possibility—then we are dealing with the fourth work of mystical-ascetic character written originally by a female religious in Middle Dutch, but which was soon thereafter rendered into Latin (undoubtedly by a male ecclesiastic).[328]

The female religious movement in the southern Netherlands, then, produced a number of important reforms in the realm of religious literature.[329] Most striking are the numerous *vitae* produced here. Recording the lives of the founders of religious movements in the form of hagiographies is certainly nothing unusual in the Middle Ages, but the scale on which it occurs in Liège-Brabant is strikingly large. Moreover, the large number of female *vitæ* written here is remarkable. In the

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[326] Ms. Brussels, KB, 4459–70, ff. 148v–150r; ed. Reypens 1949.

[327] Ms. Brussels, KB, 4459–70, ff. 252r–v; ed. Axters 1941.

[328] Reypens 1964, 26*–31* argues that the *Catalogus virorum illustrium* could be a reference to the *virgine ordinis Cisterciensis*. He was not able to identify this nun in his 1949, but here he believed that he could link her with the Cistercian Beatrijs van Dendermonde from the convent of Zwijveke. In that scenario, Willem van Affligem will have been the one who translated her visions into Latin. It will be clear that in the light of the most recent insights concerning Willem van Affligem and his authorship of the Copenhagen *Leven van Lutgart* (see § 1.1), this issue will need to be readdressed.

[329] Cf. For more on this, see Peters 1988, pp. 27–35 and Lauwers 1989, especially pp. 103–108.

contemporaneously flourishing movement of the Franciscan order it was especially the biographies of Francis that served as the mirror for the *vita mystica* and the apostolic life.[330] That the writing of biographies of female religious was a regional activity is illustrated especially by the *vita* of Margaretha Contracta. Not only does Johannes von Magdeburg refer in his prologue to the remarkable religious situation in Brabant, but the text itself appears to have circulated exclusively in the southern Netherlands.

Furthermore, the relatively high number of women writing in the Liège-Brabant region calls attention to itself. If we ignore for the moment the scribbles of Ida of Gorsleeuw and perhaps a few others, we are still left with a handful of serious writers: Beatrice of Nazareth and her *liber vitae*, the anonymous who wrote about her friend Juliana of Mont-Cornillon, the Beguine from Tongeren, the anonymous Cistercian nun, another Cistercian nun whose secret visions were reworked by Willem van Affligem (if she was in fact not to be identified as Beatrice) and lastly, of course, Hadewijch. A number of these female authors were already active in the first quarter of the thirteenth century; for Beatrice of Nazareth and the friend of Juliana of Mont-Cornillon this is virtually certain. For the record: the works of these female authors pale somewhat by comparison with what their Lower Saxon peers produced at Helfta. Only the colourful oeuvre of Hadewijch, which is comprised of visions, letters, poems in stanzas and poems in couplets, is comparable. But in defence of the other authors from the Liège-Brabant region, perhaps, it may be observed that Gertrud the Great, Mechthild von Hackeborn and probably other authors from Helfta began to write only in the second half of the century.

> It is striking that most of these authors found themselves on the Germanic side of the language border. On the Romance side, only Juliana of Mont-Cornillon's friend from Liège may be counted. It will be certainly more than half a century before the most prominent female author, the Beguine from Hainaut, Margaretha Porete (†1310), begins to manifest herself in a literary sense. Her controversial *Mirouer des ames simples anienties* proved fatal to her: she was burned at the stake in 1310 at Valenciennes because she continued to disseminate her daring book despite repeated warnings from church authorities.[331] Chapter 4 will deal in more detail with the Old French religious literature of the southern Netherlands.

[330] Cf. Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, pp. 377–405.

[331] Ed. Guarnieri & Verdeyen 1986 (OF and Lat., respectively). On Margaretha Porete, see e.g. Dinzelbacher 1994, pp. 268–271, Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, pp. 338–371 and McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, pp. 244–265.

Whereas the nuns of Helfta apparently wrote in Latin—though this is an indisputable certainty only in the case of Gertrud the Great—the southern Netherlandic sisters' preference for the vernacular, be it Walloon or Middle Dutch, is striking. This characteristic aspect of Liège-Brabant female spirituality tends to become lost in the shuffle because, with the exception of Hadewijch, we only know the work of these women in Latin translation or adaptation. Johannes van Sint-Truiden's miscellany from Villers is in this respect a defining manuscript because it alone contains the *De virgine ordinis Cisterciensis* and the *Verbum Christi ad beginam Tungerensem* and moreover constitutes the oldest witness to the *Vita Beatricis*. All three are Latin adaptations of originally Middle Dutch works composed by women. That Johannes van Sint-Truiden included them in this codex underscores the interest shared by him and his fellow brethren from Villers for these expressions of female spirituality. But it is also revealing that that these monks translated the original texts into Latin and in the process apparently thoroughly revised them, as the author of the *Vita Beatricis* demonstrably did. There are several possible explanations for this. Old hands at Latin that they were, monks like Johannes van Sint-Truiden must have found the undoubtedly rather amateurship—from a rhetorical and theological perspective—works of the nuns to be quite strange or unusual. It may well be that they wished to adapt the vernacular writings of the nuns under their pastoral care as best they could to the Latin tradition. The author of the *Vita Beatricis* says that he has only coloured the material he found with the stylistic features appropriate to Latin: *oblata verba vulgaria Latino tantum eloquio coloravi*.[332] But it is likely that the translators and adaptors wished to neutralise a potentially dangerous theology, formulated as it was by the injudicious, by casting these works into the language of the church and in the process employing orthodox terminology.[333]

We cannot deny a certain level of interest in the spiritual lives of these women among the Cistercians and other religious charged with the pastoral care of the *mulieres religiosae* in Liège and Brabant. Several of them wrote their biographies, others translated and adapted their writings and many more compiled collections in which the female religious from this region are prominently featured. In this light it is somewhat

[332] Reypens 1964, p. 14,33–34; cf. Vekeman 1993, p. 32.

[333] Faesen 1999b illustrates how the *Vita Beatricis* was written against the backdrop of the thirteenth-century debate over the possibility of the unmediated observance of God [beatific vision]. For more on this, see § 4.3.

surprising to find that the Cistercians in the Netherlands produced little if any systematic program of vernacular literature for these women.[334] Although there were many Cistercian nuns who put pen to parchment to record their experiences in Middle Dutch, no Dutch texts from the thirteenth century are known that can be connected with the nunneries of that order. There are only two Middle Dutch codices that can be associated with the Liège-Brabant region by virtue of their contents: manuscript H containing the *Limburg sermons* and the manuscript from The Hague containing the *Boec der minnen*. For neither of these, however, do we possess data concerning their early provenance. On the face of it, the *Limburg sermons* fit nicely into the literary milieu of the southern Netherlands dominated especially by the Cistercians. Seidel suspects that the Middle Dutch y2 branch of the *St. Georgen sermons* originated within the Cistercian order: the German sermon collection could have made its way into the Netherlands, for example, via the monastery Val-Dieu (near Aubel), a foundation of Eberbach.[335] The original H*-text was in all likelihood aimed at women; it would certainly not have gone without an appropriate audience in this region, though it is impossible to be any more certain than this. Manuscript H was not intended for a female audience. The notion that this manuscript was perhaps intended for Cistercian lay brothers may be dismissed out of hand. The Cistercian constitutions explicitly designate the lay brothers as manual labourers who had no business concerning themselves with the world of letters. They were even forbidden to be familiar with any religious texts, beyond such basic things as the *Pater noster*, the *Credo* or the *Miserere*.[336] Of course, monastic rules are just that, rules, and one may posit that such a prohibition points to an already existing activity,

[334] The only concrete example I know is a manuscript with an OF translation of a number of constitutional treatises of Cistercian nature which originated in the vicinity of Douai (see § 4.4).

[335] Seidel 2003, pp. 209–210 and pp. 247–251.

[336] Cap. VIII van *Capitula usuum conversorum* from the Cistercian *Consuetudines*, reads: *Nullus habeat librum nec discat aliquid. nisi tantum Pater noster et Credo in deum. Miserere mei deus. et cetera que debere dici ab eis statutum est: et hoc non littera sed cordetenus* (ed. Guignard 1878, 283). For the policy of keeping Cistercian lay brothers intentionally illiterate, see also Schreiner 1993, especially pp. 301–303 and Palmer 1998, pp. 138–139. But there are also counter-examples: we know for certain that the lay brother Henricus of Ter Doest wrote six codices at the end of the thirteenth century, and in a particularly splendid script (see Lieftinck 1953, pp. 46–48 and figs. 16, 17a and 17b; cf. *Schatten uit de Biekorf* 1994, ms. 6, ms. 13 and ms. 114).

but in this context it seems very unlikely that the brothers referred to in manuscript H were lay brothers from Cîteaux.

We are now in a position to draw a number of general conclusions concerning literary historical circumstances in the thirteenth century. In the German-speaking region, especially in the Rhineland, a number of texts and manuscript collections came into existence in the thirteenth century, such as the *St. Georgen sermons*, which were aimed predominately at an audience of female religious. In most cases it cannot be determined whether these were nuns or unaffiliated women, such as Beguines. Given the great expansion of the Cistercians, on the one hand, and the specific contents of these works on the other, it seems logical to associate this small yet early flourishing of religious literature in German with this order especially. It proves to be rather difficult, however, to confirm this association: with the exception of the *Die heilige Regel*, not one of the Rhineland texts can be linked exclusively to the Cistercian order.

There is an early thirteenth-century German-language corpus of literature that appears to have a Cistercian basis, whereas on the other hand this order took a leading role, especially in the Netherlands, within the female religious movement. The interest amongst the Cistercians, but also among the members of diverse other orders, in the *cura monialium* manifests itself in the local fashion of writing the *vitae* of *mulieres religiosae*. There is, however, hardly any trace to be found of a Middle Dutch literature initiated by the religious who were involved in the women's movement. The situation is perhaps somewhat different on the French-language side of things; we will return to this question in chapter 4. The women's movement in the Liège-Brabant region would appear to be the ideal environment for the *Limburg sermons*, but based on what little we actually know about the collection, these sermons cannot be placed there definitively. Although the Cistercian order in the archbishopric of Cologne achieved an expansion comparable to that in the southern Netherlands, and the Beguines underwent an impressive renaissance, the genre of *vita* is almost entirely absent there.[337] But the

[337] Cf. Ostrowitzki 1993, p. 40. The Lower Rhine region boasts only the *vita* of the Premonstratensian Hermann Josef von Steinfeld (†1225), who was also the author of a number of hymns to the limbs of Christ (for more on him see Worstbrock 1981). It is noteworthy that the authorship of these hymns has also been claimed for Arnulf of Louvain, abbot of Villers (†1248); the spirituality of Hermann Josef apparently approaches that of the Cistercians (cf. Worstbrock 1978). It may be that the *vita* of Hermann Josef was influenced by the oldest lives of abbots from the Premonstratensian

Lower Rhine region did produce a vernacular literature, represented by the *Rheinische Marienlob*, *Die Lilie*, the *Buch der Minne* and a few shorter texts. Their contents almost require us to link them with the religious movement in the neighbouring southern Netherlands, and as such with the circles in which the *Limburg sermons* came into existence.

The circumstances under which the *Limburg sermons* collection came into being and were first used remain veiled in mystery. We are not able at this moment to pinpoint exactly in which religious milieu the texts were translated and compiled. Furthermore, manuscript H appears in one sense to be an anomaly because its text was altered to address an audience of monks, whereas we would have thought that an audience of women, preferably Cistercian, would have been targeted in the first phase of the *Limburg sermons* tradition. If the brothers for whom H was intended were Beghards or Tertiaries, it remains a mystery why in the process of adaptation all direct references to the monastic life were not removed. Beghards and Tertiaries combined a life of physical labour with a number of religious tasks, but at any rate certainly not with the performance of the Divine Office, to which both the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* regularly refer. We must therefore try to find answers to these questions by other means. Chapter two is therefore devoted to a detailed exploration of the contents and composition of the *Limburg sermons* collection.

monastery Mariëngaarde in Hallum. It is true that this house was a daughter-convent of Steinfeld, but in cultural terms it may well have overshadowed the mother-convent somewhat in the thirteenth century (Lambooij & Mol 2001, pp. 37–38).

CHAPTER TWO

THE TEXTUAL CORPUS

The anonymous person who compiled the *Limburg sermons* found himself confronted by no small task. The compilation of a large collection of vernacular religious prose must have been a unique undertaking in his day. Because it was still unusual in the thirteenth century to write about religious issues in Middle Dutch, appropriate materials for the collection had to be sought in many directions, and it further had to be adapted for a particular audience. That the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* resorted to a translation of the *St. Georgen sermons*-corpus is perfectly understandable. The Middle High German sermons were the product of a much older and richer tradition of religious literature than existed in the Netherlands. But that there existed already an emergent Middle Dutch literature is also incontrovertible, for the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* drew extensively upon it.

A good way to get to know this mysterious figure in relation to his impressive undertaking is via a thorough analysis of the corpus of texts that he compiled. Which texts did he choose? To what extent did he alter his source materials? What purpose did he have in mind when he began to compile this prose corpus? For what audience was he writing? What was the nature of his literary connections that allowed him to acquire so much suitable material? In this chapter we will attempt to answer these and similar questions. To this end we must rely especially upon manuscript H, which, though it is itself surrounded by riddles, is the only extant thirteenth-century manuscript containing the *Limburg sermons*. Wherever possible we will try to penetrate to the H* stage that preceded the manuscript itself. In that way, we can best hope to become acquainted with the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*.

In this chapter each one of the *Limburg sermons* will be discussed individually or in related groups. The translated *St. Georgen sermons* form quite obviously the largest group. Of these, only Ls. 31 (Rd. 60) receives individual scrutiny, because it has been more drastically altered than the other translated *St. Georgen sermons*. Next there follow sixteen additional *Limburg sermons*: the first seven as a group, because they exhibit strong mutual connections, and the remainder one by one. In this way the

reader will gain a good idea of what the *Limburg sermons* have to offer. The *Maastrichtse passiespel* [*Maastricht Passion Play*] has also been given a place in this discussion. Though this text was added to manuscript H at a later date, it has stronger ties with the preceding *Limburg sermons* than previously thought. The analysis begins, however, with a discussion of the table of contents to MS H, which is unique within the transmission of the *Limburg sermons* and provides insight into the intended function of its oldest witness. The chapter concludes with a preliminary review in which a number of important results are discussed in conjunction with one another.

2.1 *The Table of Contents in MS H*

Manuscript H, containing the *Limburg sermons* is an especially well executed example of book production. Whereas many vernacular manuscripts are of relatively diminutive size this codex is of robust proportions (260 × 185 mm). All of the *Limburg sermons* were written by the same hand, and rubricated by another, and as such the manuscript forms a stylistic unit.[1] The book must have been made by professionals, for not only the script, but also the opening miniature and the penwork are of very high quality. These high standards lead one to suspect that manuscript H was created by those with a deep knowledge of books, and especially monastic books. It exhibits in particular similarities with a number of codices from monasteries and chapters in the wider region of Maastricht (see § 1.1). Whichever institution commissioned this codex must have had considerable means, and it must have been connected in some way to monastic circles.

The craftsmanship with which H was executed is also evidenced by the well-organized table of contents with which it was provided, which enabled quick and easy access to individual sermons (fig. 9). The table of contents was written on a bifolium at the very beginning of the codex (ff. 1r–2v). It was made by the same two scribes who copied and rubricated the *Limburg sermons*, and was presumably added shortly after the main text was completed. The largest portion was written by

[1] With respect to the paleographical aspects of the table of contents and the rest of manuscript H I refer to Gumbert 1987, 168 and Erik Kwakkel's description of the manuscript, which is included in this book as Appendix I. Incidentally, Frühwald (1963, 82) is of the opinion that two hands were involved in creating the rubrics.

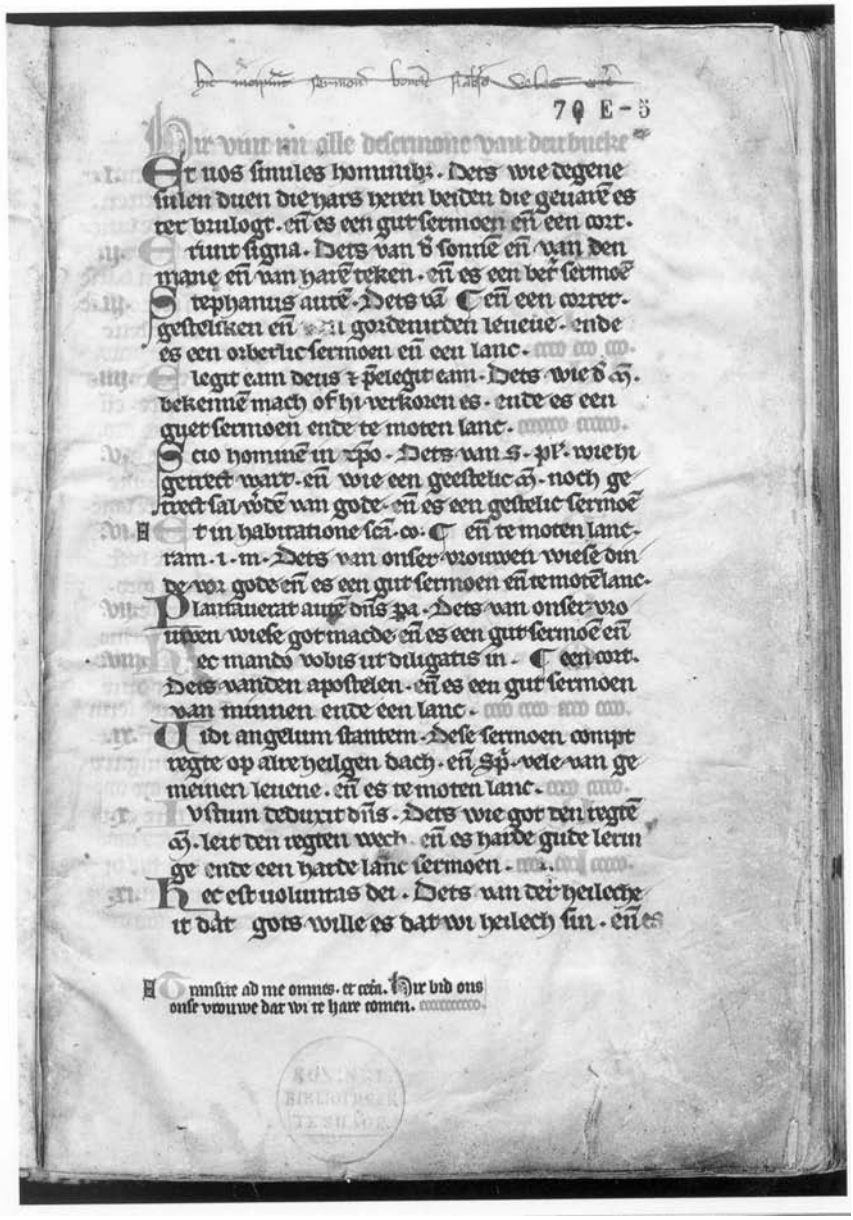

Fig. 9. MS The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 70 E 5, f. 1r. Opening page of the table of contents to the *Limburg sermons*.

the hand responsible for the text, while the rubricator added the titles and rubrics to the sermons. The sermons are numbered with roman numerals; these correspond to the numbers that are found in the body of the text, appearing centered in the upper margin of top in the middle of the recto side of each folio.

> This table of contents—unique in the Middle Dutch tradition, at any rate—is further testimony to the great skill of the makers of manuscript H. It accords well, to a point, with a thirteenth-century development which manifested itself especially in the Latin tradition and which employed innovative heuristic methods designed to provide better access to important books and texts.[2] The Cistercian order played a pioneering role in this development, to which movement the southern Netherlands made a significant contribution. The abbeys Ter Duinen (near Koksijde) and Ter Doest (Lissewege) in West Flanders deserve special mention in this regard, among other things for their development of a new system of foliation.[3] Villers, too, made a significant contribution in this regard by providing the *Flores paradysii*, an important florilegium, with an exhaustive table of contents in the first half of the thirteenth century.[4] The table of contents in H may also be seen as a highly innovative attempt to provide better access to a large, and in this case, vernacular, textual corpus. The presence of this table of contents in manuscript H is perhaps as well an argument for a localization within Cistercian circles.

Each entry in the table of contents consists of the following elements, in this order: the number of the sermon (in Roman numerals), (a portion of) the Latin theme, a title in Middle Dutch, a succinct description of the sermon and an indication of the length of the text.[5] As needed, the lines were filled out in order to achieve a more or less justified righthand margin. Here, by way of example, are the entries for Ls. 1 and 2:

> I. Et vos similes hominibus. Dets wie degene sulen duen die hars heren beiden, die gevaren es ter brulogt, ende es een gut sermoen ende een cort.
>
> [And your yourselves like to men. This concerns how those should behave who await the Lord, who have gone to the wedding, and it is a good sermon, and brief.]

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[2] On the broader context, see Rouse & Rouse 1991, 221–255.

[3] On the mss. from Ter Duinen and Ter Doest see Lieftinck 1953 (in this context especially 52–58); on the search apparatus developed here, see also Rouse 1976, 129–130.

[4] Rouse 1976, 128–129; for the *Flores paradysii* by Villers, see now Falmagne 2001.

[5] Cf. for this table of contents Frühwald 1963, 82–83.

> II. Erunt signa. Dets van der sonnen ende van den mane ende van haren teken, ende es een beter sermoen ende een corter.[6]
>
> [There shall be signs. This concerns the sun and the moon and their signs, and is a better sermon and a shorter one.]

Each one of the *Limburg sermons* bears a rubric in red ink, which seldom corresponds exactly with what appears in the table of contents. The descriptions of content and length are not usually included in the rubrics. Ls. 1 lacks the rubric altogether, because the space where it would otherwise have appeared is taken up by an historiated initial. The rubric to Ls. 2 is as follows: *Dets van der sonnen ende van den mone ende van haren teken*.[7]

Despite all the evident care with which the table of contents was constructed, some errors were made. These allow us to form a clearer picture of how it was made. The scribe of H (hand 1) forgot to include Ls. 7 in the table of contents. This error was discovered by the rubricator (hand 2), who then added the incipit to Ls. 7 in the lower margin of the table of contents, but due to the limited space without the number and indications of length and quality: *Transite ad me omnes et cetera. Hir bid ons onse vrouwe dat wi te hare comen*. [Come over to me, all ye etc. Here the Virgin Mary prays that we come to her].[8] In the book itself both Ls. 6 and Ls. 7 were given the number VI. For this reason, all subsequent *Limburg sermons* in MS H bear a number that is too low by one.[9]

The rubricator intervened once again at the end of the table of contents, this time in a less transparently understandable manner. The entry to Ls. 46 (which, due to the aforementioned error, appears as 'LXV' in the manuscript) has been truncated, as appears from the absence of the usual indication of length, as well as the period or point which normally appears at the end of each entry: *Ortus conclusus est. Dets van onser vrouwen, wie dasse een besloten boegaert es, ende een besigelt borne, ende es een gut sermoen*. [She is an enclosed garden. This concerns the Virgin Mary, how she is like an orchard, and a sealed spring, and it is a good sermon].[10] The original intention may have been to complete

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[6] Kern 1895, 177:3–8.
[7] Kern 1895, 189:10–11.
[8] Kern 1895, 177:23–24.
[9] Kern 1895 has corrected the mistakes in the table of contents as well as the numbering, so that there is no longer any confusion when referring to the *LS* in his edition.
[10] Kern 1895, 181:6–8.

it on the following folio—given the missing point it would seem that hand 1 intended to do so—but as work proceeded this plan was abandoned. It was the rubricator, hand 2, who ultimately added the entry to Ls. 47 (manuscript: XLVI) in the lower margin of f. 2v, in a somewhat smaller hand and in a much abbreviated form: *Confortamini in Domino et cetera. Hir leert ons Sente Pauwels striden* [Be strengthened in the Lord. Here St. Paul teaches us how to struggle].[11] It would seem, then, that hand 2, who was the last to work on the manuscript, went to great pains to squeeze the entire table of contents onto the bifolium it may well have been intended to occupy.[12]

That plans for the ultimate function the codex was to serve were modified as work progressed is clear especially from the absence of Ls. 48 in the table of contents. The purpose of this omission becomes clear when we turn to the codex itself and observe that the text of Ls. 48 breaks off at the end of a gathering (f. 232v). The catchword *ven gin* at the bottom of f. 232v proves beyond any doubt that this *Limburg sermon* was originally intended to be completed (fig. 10). And given the fact that the inital L with which this sermon opens is complete (fig. 15), then this must indeed have happened. But hand 2, who provided all of the texts with a rubric in red ink, failed to do so in the case of Ls. 48. Because it was he who added the entry for Ls. 47 on the last page of the table of contents (and failed to do so for Ls. 48), then it must also have been the rubricator who decided not to include Ls. 48 in the table of contents, despite its already having been copied.

The value judgments which the table of contents attaches to the *Limburg sermons* are formulated in fairly stereotypical fashion. The adjectives used are *gut* [good], *geestelic* [spiritual] and *orberlic* [useful, appropriate, profitable], now and again intensified with the adverb *harde* [very]. Within these characterizations the texts themselves are referred to as either a *sermoen* or a *leringe* [edifying text]. It is worth noting that no texts appear with a negative adjective—with the possible exception of Ls. 1, which is judged to be less good than Ls. 2 (see citation above).

[11] Kern 1895, 181:9–10.

[12] Gumbert 1987, 168 n. 8 observes that it is very difficult to assess the construction of the first quire of ms. 70 E 5, which contains folios 1–4 and is now comprised of four pages and two 'stubs'. It was presumably originally a 'senio', a quire of 6 folios, like all the other quires in which the *Limburg sermons* were written. But just how the pages were originally arranged is difficult to determine (see also Appendix I).

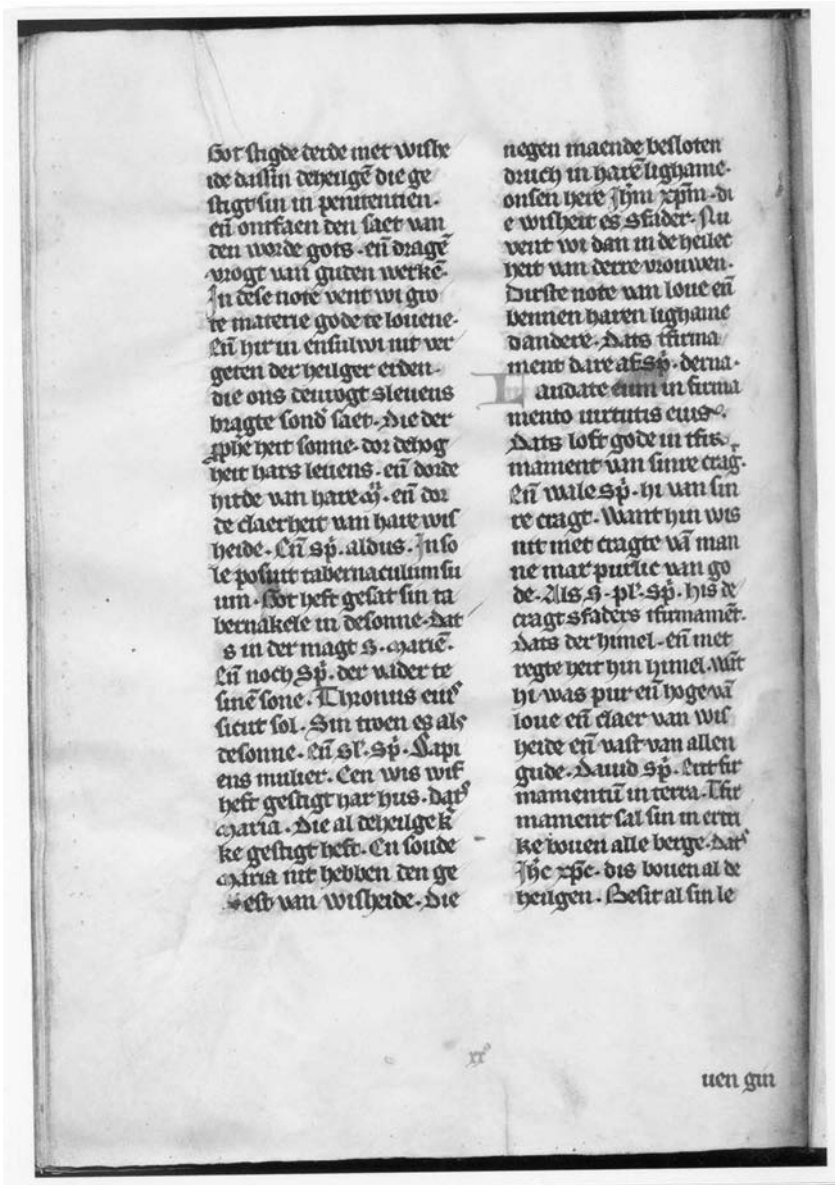

Fig. 10. MS The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 70 E 5, f. 232v. Ls. 48 ends abruptly on this page; at the bottom appears the catchword *ven gin*.

The most pronounced judgment falls to Ls. 31: *Dixi ascendam in palmam. Dets der palmboem, ende es der beste sermoen van den buke ende harde lanc* [This concerns the palm tree, and it is the best sermon in the book and very long].[13] Unfortunately, the preferences of those who created the table of contents are not further expounded upon, but given the other qualifications they provide, we may surmise that they were motivated by contents rather than aesthetics. Presumably these value judgments were intended as a further service to the reader, who thus derived some idea of the texts available from the table of contents.[14]

The qualitative indications found in H show up more frequently elsewhere in the *Limburg sermons* tradition. Our most important witness in this regard is the fifteenth-century manuscript W2, from Rooklooster. Three of the five *Limburg sermons* it contains include a rubric which strongly resembles the corresponding entry in the table of contents of H, and much less so the rubrics elsewhere in that manuscript. By way of example, I print below from Ls. 27, Ls. 31 and Ls. 41 the entry in the table of contents of H, the rubric from H, and the rubric from W2 (which does not have a table of contents):

> Manete in me et ego in vobis. Dets wie dat wi in Gode bliven ende Got in ons, ende es gut ende cort. (H, TOC)
> [Abide in me, and I in you. This concerns how we dwell in God and God in us, and is a good one, and brief]
> Dits wie der mensche in Gode blift ende Got in heme. (H, rubric)
> [This concerns how man dwells in God and God in him]
> Dits hoe wi in gode bliven ende god in ons. (W2, rubric)[15]
> [This concerns how we dwell in God and God in us]

> Dixi ascendam in palmam. Dets der palmboem, ende es der beste sermoen van den buke ende harde lanc. (H, TOC)
> [I said: I will go up into the palm tree. This concerns the palm tree, and it is the best sermon in the book, and very long]
> Dets dbuec van den palmboeme. (H, rubric)
> [This is the book of the palm tree]

[13] Kern 1895, 179:31–33.

[14] Frühwald 1963, 82 suspects that the rubricator penned this positive assessment because he recognized the familiar Palm Tree treatise amongst so many unfamiliar works. In doing so he assumes a greater knowledge of thirteenth-century German literature on the part of the Dutch author than may be sustained.

[15] Kern 1895, 179:22–24, 423:22–23 and W2, f. 290v, respectively.

> Dits die palmboeme ende is een uutvercoren sermoen. (W2, rubric)[16]
> [This is about the palm tree and is an excellent sermon]
>
> Die hoeger ende vrier minnen plegen wilt. Dit sprict van negenrehande minnen, ende es een geestelic sermoen ende een lanc ende gude leringe. (H, TOC)
> He who would practice the higher and freer form of love. This speaks of nine manners of love, and is a spiritual and a long and good edifying text.
> Dit leert ons negenrehande minne. (H, rubric)
> This teaches us about nine manners of love]
> Dit spreect van menigherhande minnen ende is goede gheestelike lere. (W2, rubric)[17]
> [This speaks of many manners of loving and is a good edifying text]

The most straightforward explanation for these unmistakable correspondences would be that W2 is derived from manuscript H, which would necessitate an explanation for why the rubrics in W2 were based on the table of contents entries, and not the rubrics, in MS H. But the stemma of the Middle Dutch y2 tradition mitigates against such a reconstruction: these manuscripts do not stand in a line of direct dependence upon one another. This means that the value judgments contained in the individual *Limburg sermons* must have been added during the H* stage, upon which W2 is based. It is likely that they appeared in H* as rubrics attached to the texts, and not in a table of contents. All evidence seems to indicate that the table of contents was unique to manuscript H.

> The qualifying indications remain in the rubrics to Ls. 15, Ls. 19 and Ls. 45 in manuscript H. Ls. 15 is introduced in the table of contents by the following: *Videntibus illis elevatus est. Dets een gestelic sermoen ende een orberlic ende een lanc* [While they looked on, he was raised up. This is a spiritual sermon, both profitable and long]. The rubric is virtually identical, excepting that the indication of length has been left out: *Dets een gestelic sermoen ende een orberlic* [This is a spiritual sermon and a profitable one].[18] The entry in the table of contents to Ls. 19 reads: *Beniamyn amantissimus domini. Dets van Sente Pauwels bekeringen ende es een harde gut sermoen ende een cort* [And to Benjamin (he said): the best beloved of the Lord. This concerns the conversion of

[16] Kern 1895, 179:31–33, 439:22 and W2, f. 198r, respectively.
[17] Kern 1895, 180:28–30, 557:19 and W2, f. 231r (this rubric has been struck through), respectively.
[18] Kern 1895, 178:22–23 and 339:14–15, respectively.

St. Paul, and is a very good sermon and brief], and the rubric: *Dit sprict van Sente Pauwels bekeringen ende es een gut sermoen* [This speaks of St. Paul's conversion and is a good sermon].[19] For Ls. 45, the table of contents includes: *Anima mea liquefacta est. Det sprict van der selen, ende es een geestelic sermoen ende te moten lanc* [My soul melted. This speaks of the soul, and it is a spiritual sermon and moderately long] while the rubric reads: *Dets van der heilger selen ende es een guet sermoen* [This concerns the blessed soul and it is a good sermon].[20] Perhaps the rubricator took these rubrics from his exemplar (H*?) by mistake—in which these judgments were formulated as rubrics—whereas the original plan for manuscript H clearly provided for them to be incorporated into the table of contents.

With the exception of W2, rubrics corresponding to the entries in the table of contents of H appear seldom, if at all, in the fifteenth-century corpus manuscripts.[21] But there is one fifteenth-century manuscript containing a single *Limburg sermons*, namely Ls. 39, that does include a comparable rubric. There is a connection between this manuscript (Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 11.729–30) and the Rooklooster, too, though that monastery's owner's mark dates only to the seventeenth century.[22] Ls. 39 is introduced there as follows:

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[19] Kern 1895, 178:34–188:2 and 384:14–15, respectively.

[20] Kern 1895, 181:4–5 and 616:1–2, respectively.

[21] Am has no table of contents and its rubrics characterize almost all of the texts, *LS* or otherwise, as *goet* or *suverlijc* (Lievens 1964 reproduces the table of contents, rubrics and incipits). B1 has no table of contents; the texts it contains bear inscriptions that diverge from what is described above (for more see Slijpen 1937). Br 1 has an extremely abbreviated table of contents that combines very brief characterizations of each sermon's contents with a reference to its location in the manuscript. One or two of the inscriptions of the *LS* recorded in this manuscript are reminiscent of the table of contents entries in W2 (and may thus be traced back to H*), especially that of Ls. 31: *Dit es vanden palmboom ende een uutvercoren sermoen* [This concerns the palm tree and is an excellent sermon] (f. 89r). Furthermore, a couple of sermons are characterized here in rubrics as *goet*, but these are for the most part texts that do not belong to the *LS* (for more see Lievens 1958). In Br2 the inscriptions were adapted to fit the function of the manuscript, which is a thematic collection of Marian texts (cf. Sherwood-Smith & Stoop 2003, vol. 1, 686–694). And yet we read the following rubric for Ls. 21: *Een cappittel hoe dat men onser liever vrouwen geliket bi in enen wynstock. Een gracelyc sermoen* [A chapter describing how the Blessed Virgin Mary is to be compared to a vine. A graceful sermon], which may or may not be reminiscent of the characterization (H calls this a *gut sermoen*). My thanks are due Patricia Stoop (Antwerp) and Maria Sherwood-Smith (Amsterdam) who graciously shared their findings on this manuscript with me. La contains no table of contents (though it has the same formatting as H); space has been provided for rubrics, but these have not been added (Zieleman 1987).

[22] On ms. Brussels, KB, 11.729–30 see Stooker & Verbeij 1997, no. 1014 (with bibliography); rubric after Schmidtke 1982, 38.

> Got hi mut ons allen gruten. Dets dbuec van den boegarde ende es een harde geestelic sermoen ende een cort. (H, TOC)
>
> [May God greet us all. This is the book of the vineyard and it is a good, spiritual sermon and it is a short one.]
>
> God die moet ons allen groeten. Dit is tboec van den boemgaerde ende is een goet gheestelic sermoen. (MS Brussels, rubric)[23]
>
> [May God greet us all. This is the book of the vineyard and it is a good, spiritual sermon.]

Apparently ca. 1400 an exemplar containing the *Limburg sermons* must have been available in the vicinity of Rooklooster, one containing the 'old' rubrics that included the value judgments.

The table of contents in H is unique, not just within the *Limburg sermons* tradition, but within the entire tradition of extant Middle Dutch religious literature, as well. No other manuscripts are known to me, at least, with tables of contents that, in addition to titles and numbers, include value judgments and indications of length. The value judgments appear to have been included at the very outset of the *Limburg sermons* tradition, but the indications of length are unique to H. Their presence may best be explained by the manuscript's primary function as a source for oral delivery. Such information is, after all, of greatest use to someone who is to read the texts aloud, and must assess the amount of material ahead of time, than it would be to someone who might read the texts silently—which begs the question how common it would have been at the end of the thirteenth century for anyone to read Middle Dutch manuscripts containing religious texts privately. The indications of length in the table of contents further increased the utility of the already well-conceived manuscript H. And yet this innovation in the *Limburg sermons* tradition did not catch on. Manuscript La, the only one to preserve the order of the sermons in H, has no table of contents at all.

It is worthwhile to consider how the table of contents and the rubrics make use of genre categories. This may reveal further information about the intentions of the manuscript's creators, or perhaps even about their literary views. The table of contents in H begins with the rubric: *Hier vint mi alle de sermone van den bueke* [Here one finds all of the

[23] Kern 1895, 180:22–24 and ms. Brussels, KB, 11.729–30, f. 22r, respectively.

sermons in the book].[24] The compilers of this codex thus regard their work as a collection of sermons, but what precisely do they mean by this term?[25] Of the 48 texts, 35 are in fact given the label 'sermon' in their corresponding entry in the table of contents, such as Ls. 3, for example: *Stephanus autem. Dets van gesteliken ende van gordinirden levene, ende es een orberlic sermoen ende een lanc* [This concerns the religious and ordained life, and it is a useful sermon, and a long one].[26]

It should be noted here that three texts did not receive a full entry, namely Ls. 7 and Ls. 47, which were added in abbreviated form by the rubricator, and Ls. 48, which is missing entirely from the table of contents (see above).

There remain then ten texts that apparently did not deserve the title of 'sermon' (Ls. 20, 22–27, 29–30 and 33). All of these texts are referred to in the table of contents as *cort* [brief] (Ls. 19, 20, 22, 26, 27, 33) or even *alecort* [very brief] (Ls. 23–25 en 30). There are, however, a few of the *Limburg sermons* that are classified as brief in the table of contents, but nonetheless qualify as sermons (Ls. 18, 19 and 28). All of these, however, are translations of brief *St. Georgen sermons*.[27] Three of the four that were compiled by means of a mosaic technique from two brief *St. Georgen sermons* are nevertheless included, according to the table of contents, in the 'brief' category: Ls. 23, 26 and 29. Only Ls. 21 escapes this fate, for it counts as a sermon, despite at the same time being labelled 'brief'. In their application of the label 'sermon', the compilers of manuscript H have at any rate taken into account the length of the texts, without being too stringent in their application of it.

Before proceeding in this line of inquiry, we would do well to consult the dictionaries. The *Vroegmiddelnederlands woordenboek* [Dictionary of Early Middle Dutch] defines the word as: 'Redevoering, meer bepaald: leerrede, preek' [a speech, more precisely: lecture, sermon], whereby the emphasis is on the oral aspect.[28] *Middelnederlandsch woordenboek* [Dictionary of Middle Dutch] gives two main meanings under the lemma

[24] Kern 1895, 177:1–2.

[25] In the terminology of the Latin monastic sermon the term *sermo* is used both for texts intended to be preached and for sermons meant to be read silently (Kienzle 2000c, 271).

[26] Kern 1895, 177:9–11.

[27] Most of them belong to a group distinguished by Seidel 2003, 232–233 and contained in Rd. 44, 62, 64–66, 68–70 and 73. These sermons are brief, have a Latin theme, but otherwise contain no Latin quotations.

[28] *VMNW* 3, 4267; as already observed in § 1.1, the *LS* as they appear in manuscript H have not been included in this dictionary.

sermoen.[29] The first of these is not 'sermon', but 'iets dat iemand zegt, onafhankelijk van de lengte van de uitspraak of rede' [an utterance, independent of the length of said utterance or speech]. The term *sermoen* is used in this sense already by Jacob van Maerlant in his *Wapene Martijn*, which is to say, the late thirteenth century. The second meaning is then 'redevoering' [speech], or, more specifically 'preek' [sermon] or 'leerrede' [lecture]. This portion of the lemma cites the table of contents of manuscript H rather heavily, but it remains doubtful whether the meaning of this term is really very clear here. In both meaning given, the *Middelnederlandsch woordenboek* stresses especially the connotation of orality that is associated with the term 'sermoen.' In light of this we may well ask whether the frequent use of this term in the table of contents and rubrics of H may not have been inspired by the intended use of the manuscript as a text for oral delivery. The table of contents in H, then, could just as well have been compiled with the meaning 'iets dat iemand zegt' [an utterance] in mind.

That the term 'sermoen' had a different valence for the compilers of manuscript H than it has for us appears from the way in which Ls. 31 was incorporated into the table of contents (see above). The text that is described there as the best *sermoen* in the book, has alwyas been referred to in Germanic and Netherlandic studies as the 'Palmbaum*traktat*' or 'palmboom*traktaat*' [palmtree treatise]. This consists of a compilation of an older palmtree allegory (behind which, incidently, there lies a sermon) and a number of excerpts from older Middle High German sources (see § 2.3; as an aside it should be noted that both rubrics and table of contents are absent from manuscript G; in this respect, the Middle Dutch tradition shows its independence). A modern literary scholar would not be so quick to allocate this text to the genre of the sermon, but for the scribes of manuscript H of the *Limburg sermons*, this does not seem to have posed a problem.

Thus far we have discussed only those *Limburg sermons* that are translations from the *St. Georgen sermons*. The sixteen interpolated *Limburg sermons* all receive the apallation 'sermoen'—with the exception of Ls. 33—even though a small number of them is characterized as 'brief' (again, Ls. 33, and furthermore Ls. 36 and 39). Yet a significant number of these texts exhibit hardly any characteristics of the sermon. This is the case, for example, for Ls. 42, *Det sin seven maniren van minnen* [The seven ways

[29] *MNW* VII, 993–994.

of love], which is regraded in Netherlandic studies as a *traktaat* [treatise] on love. Yet even in this case the table of contents speaks here of *een harde geestelic sermoen* [a very religious sermon].[30]

The case of Ls. 41, *Dit leert ons neghenderhande minne* [This teaches us nine kinds of love], which according to the table of contents is also a sermon, is much more complicated. The first part of this text comprises an adaptation of Bernard of Clairvaux's *De diligendo deo*, while the second part is a paraphrase of a chapter from (pseudo-)Richard of St Victor's *Explicatio in Cantica canticorum* (see also § 2.7). Ls. 41 is thus comprised of two theological treatises, certainly not sermons, and yet to the compilers of MS H the resulting compilation nevertheless qualifies as a sermon. Now, the Middle Dutch paraphrase of the *Explicatio* found in Ls. 41 is also familiar to us from the oeuvre of Hadewijch, namely the tenth Letter. This paraphrase of a well-known Latin treatise is thus regarded by one Middle Dutch source as a sermon, and by another as a letter. A comparable case is Ls. 43, *Dbuec van den winkelre* [The Book of the Wine Cellar], the first part of which has been separately transmitted in a fourteenth-century manuscript, and which bears the characteristic features of a letter (§ 2.9). The most remarkable case is perhaps Ls. 40, a Middle Dutch translation of a Latin sermon by Guiard of Laon concerning the twelve fruits of the eucharist (§ 2.6). If any of the sixteen interpolated *Limburg sermons* fully deserve the label 'sermon', then this one does. Ls. 40 is indeed referred to as a sermon in the table of contents, but the rubric nevertheless reads as follows: *Dets dbuec van den twelf frogten* [This is the book of the twelve fruits].[31] There was apparently sufficient leeway to refer to this unmistakable sermon in another way.

The meaning of the word *buec* [book] is a question in its own right. (Incidently, MS H itself is twice referred as a 'book' in its table of contents.)[32] Furthermore, in two instances a text is referred to in the same sentence as both *buec* and *sermoen*: *Dets dbuec van den boegaerde, ende es een harde geestelic sermoen ende een cort* [This is the book of the orchard, and is a very spiritual sermon, and brief] (Ls. 39) and *Dets dbuec van den winkelre, ende es een harde geestelic sermoen ende een harde lanc* [This is the book

[30] Kern 1895, 180:32–33.
[31] Kern 1895, 180:25–27 and 546:23, respectively.
[32] Namely in the rubric above the table of contents cited earlier (Kern 1895, 177:1–2) and in the entry in the table of contents to Ls. 31, also cited earlier (Kern 1895, 179:32).

of the wine cellar, and is a very spiritual sermon and a very long one] (Ls. 43).[33] If the latter instance supports the obvious impression that the term *buec* is reserved for longer texts, the former undermines it, for we read that Ls. 39 is a brief text. The respective length of the two texts is indeed divergent: in Kern's edition Ls. 39 is 9 pages long, whereas Ls. 43 is no less than seventeen pages, which makes it the longest in the entire collection. Two further texts are classified as *sermoen* in the table of contents, but as *buec* in their corresponding rubrics: *Dets dbuec van den palmboeme* [This is the book of the palm tree] (Ls. 31) and *Dets dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen* [This is the book of the blessed lord Selfart's rule] (Ls. 44).[34] Both of these texts are fairly long, twenty-seven and seventeen pages long, respectively, in the edition. This would seem to justify the conclusion that the term *buec* was used especially for longer texts, with the caveat, however, that the compilers of this manuscript were not always consistent.

A review of this inquiry, then, reveals that the term *sermoen* as it is used in H connotes something in particular about the length of the texts included therein. On the one hand, the shorter *Sankt Georgener Predigen* in particular are not classified as *sermoen*, whereas on the other hand it is especially the longer texts that are categorised as *buec*. There is little reason to assume that the compilers of manuscript H employed anything resembling a formal or content-based concept of *sermoen*. They show little if any inclination to distinguish between prose genres such as sermon, treatise or letter. This practice becomes more or less understandable when we consider that the primary meaning given by the *Middelnederlandsch woordenboek* for the concept *sermoen* emphasizes the aspect of an orally delivered lecture. We may assume, then, that H was primarily intended as a collection whose contents would be delivered orally. The texts it contains automatically became *sermoenen* the moment they were read out loud, especially when the reader knew what he was doing, and knew how to take full advantage of the clear signs of orality present within the material itself. Within the context of manuscript H, then, the term *sermoen* bore in all likelihood the meaning of 'performed text' or 'orally delivered lecture'.

[33] Kern 1895, 180:34–36 and 22–24, respectively.
[34] Kern 1895, 439,22 and 599:1–2, respectively.

2.2 *The Translated* St. Georgen sermons

Thirty-two of the forty-eight *Limburg sermons* comprise translations of in total thirty-five *St. Georgen sermons* (Ls. 1–31 and 47). Theoretically it is possible that these translations existed before they were integrated into the *Limburg sermons* collection, but this does not seem likely. There are several identifiable interventions in the Middle Dutch corpus that show clearly just how much care went into compiling the *Limburg sermons* collection. The translated *St. Georgen sermons* are no exception to this rule. It is likely that the Middle High German sermons were specially translated and adapted for inclusion in the corpus of *Limburg sermons.* In this section we will demonstrate how the Middle Dutch translator adapted his Middle High German models.

The very first intervention in the *Limburg sermons* relative to the *St. Georgen sermons* has in fact nothing to do with translation, but is a good indication of the very sharp eye for composition at work here. In manuscript H, Rd. 37 is the first in the series, but the second text in the *St. Georgen sermons* corpus. The first *Sankt Georgener Predigt*, Rd. 36, is incorporated almost at the very end of the Middle Dutch compilation, as Ls. 47. The theme of this sermon is a quote from Paul: *Confortamini in Domino et in potentia virtutis eius* ('Be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of his power'; Eph. 6:10) and deals with the question of why a Christian should fight and who his enemies are. Because it is not just in MS H, but also in La, a manuscript not directly descendent from H, that the *Limburg sermons* series opens with a translation of Rd. 37, we may assume that this subtle adjustment of the order had already taken place at the H* stage. Apparently the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* felt that Rd. 37 was a more appropriate text to open the series. This text is based on a quote by Christ as found in the Gospel according to Luke: *Et vos similes hominibus expectantibus dominum suum quando revertatur a nuptiis ut cum venerit et pulsaverit confestim aperiant ei* ('And [let] you yourselves [be] like to men who wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately'; Luke 12:36). The Middle Dutch text translates this biblical passage as follows: *Gi sult gelic sin dien menschen die beiden hars heren die gevaren es ter brulogt, dassin gereet in laten* [You shall be like those men who wait for the Lord, who has gone to the wedding, who will let him in immediately].[35] Jesus implores his disciples to behave like wedding

[35] Kern 1895, 182:3–5.

guests who await the arrival of the bridegroom. This imagery fits in very well with the overall intention of the Middle Dutch sermon collection, in which *minne* and wedding mysticism are much more prominent thematic threads than in the *St. Georgen sermons*.

That this is anything but an accidental intervention is also apparent from the splendidly executed opening initial in manuscript H (fig. 3).[36] This capital initial E constitutes the beginning of the theme of Ls. 1, which is given partially in Latin: *Et vos similes hominibus et cetera*.[37] Depicted here is Christ, recognizable by the nimbus, who is addressing his apostles. His words appear on a scroll: *Et vos similes h<ominibus>*. In so doing, the inital takes up the theme of Ls. 1. From the very first page of this most ancient of the manuscripts containing the *Limburg sermons*, Christ addresses the readers and implores them to await the Bridegroom. Whether or not such an initial was present in H* is something, of course, that we can no longer know. If that was not the case, then this was the initiative of the compilers of H and may be taken as an extra indication of the care with which they approached their work.

It is in his treatment of the Middle High German exemplars that the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* shows his hand most clearly, for here we are in a position to lay the final product alongside his sources. It is not our intention to delve deeply into the translation technique of the Middle Dutch translator, in part because others—Lüders, Frühwald, Seidel—have already paid a great deal of attention to this issue. But a few general observations on the Middle Dutch translation of the Middle High German material are certainly in order. In his study of the changes of the changes that the *St. Georgen sermons* corpus underwent in the course of its transmission, Wolfgang Frühwald praises the Middle Dutch translator. 'Der Schreiber von H besitzt [...] ein ausgeprägtes Formgefühl und gestaltet ein Predigtbuch, in dem auch alle Einzelstücke vom Thema bis zum Amen vollständig ausgeführt sind' [The author of H possesses an excellent sense of form and constructs a book of sermons in which every single text, from theme to 'Amen', is thoroughly implemented.][38] Frühwald's comments pertain to the text as he was familiar with it in manuscript H, but they are equally apt, *mutatis mutandis*, with respect to H*. The compiler of the *Limburg sermons* took great pains to provide his texts with both a 'head' and a 'tail' of equal standing, giving

[36] For references to images from H, see § 1.1 n. 67.
[37] Kern 1895, 182:1.
[38] Frühwald 1963, 45–48, at p. 45.

them a Latin theme at the beginning and a closing formula at the end. The Middle High German exemplar is not consistent in its inclusion of Latin themes, while the elegant endings in the Middle Dutch versions are lacking there altogether. A closing formula in the *Limburg sermons* consists usually of a sentence which once again captures the essence of the text. Next comes a pious prayer, which as a matter of course ends with *Amen*. We recognize here the typical ending of the twelfth-century monastic sermon, which consists of an *exhortatio*—an exhortation—and a doxology—a concluding eulogy (§ 1.2).[39]

The compiler of the *Limburg sermons* exhibits on the one hand a tendency to streamline what he encountered in the *St. Georgen sermons*, and on the other a striving to cast the texts in his corpus wherever possible in the form of a sermon. Seidel epitomises the characteristic features of the Middle Dutch translation as follows:

> Die Predigten werden allgemeiner gefaßt, klarer und bisweilen einfacher formuliert, die Gedankengänge werden deutlicher herausgearbeitet, der paranätische Zug wird verstärkt, die predigthafte Form wird konsequenter durchgeführt als von der hd. Primärsammlung vorgegeben, indem Texte ohne Predigtform zu Predigten umgeformt und Stilmerkmale der Predigt verstärkt werden; all diese Tendenzen setzen sich dann in der anschließenden mnl. Überlieferung fort.
>
> [The sermons are formulated in a more general way, clearer and sometimes of simpler formulation, the lines of thought are more distinctly developed, the paranetic tone strengthened, the preacherly format more consistently applied than in the High German primary collection, in that texts lacking formal aspects of the sermon have been turned into sermons and stylistic features of the sermon have been strengthened; all of these tendencies manifest themselves more forcefully in the Middle Dutch transmission.]

The tone so emphatically established by manuscript H is perpetuated in the later transmission of the *Limburg sermons*.[40]

The compiler of the Middle Dutch translation thus approached his Middle High German sources with deliberation. He had a fairly well-defined idea of what he wanted the final result to look like. The best way to show what his method was is to look over his shoulder as he translates one of the *St. Georgen sermons*. To this end we will examine Ls. 22, a regular translation of Rd. 70, which not only has the advantage

[39] Cf. Kienzle 2000c, 285.
[40] Seidel 2003, 239–243, at p. 240.

of being fairly short, but for which, moreover, an edition of manuscript G is available.[41]

The Middle High German text bears no rubric in this manuscript: the text begins as follows: *Unsir herre sprichit alsus dur dez wissagin munt David: 'Refloruit caro mea'. Er sprichet: 'Min lip ist widir geblůget'* [Our Lord speaks thus through the mouth of the prophet David: 'Refloruit caro mea'. He says: 'My body has blossomed anew'].[42] In the Middle Dutch of manuscript H, this becomes:

> Dets wie sich got gelict eenre blumen.
> 'Refloruit caro mea et cetera.' Aldus sprict onse here dor Davits mont: 'Min vlesch es weder gebloit'.[43]
>
> [This concerns how God may be compared to a flower.
> 'Refloruit caro mea et cetera.' Thus speaks our Lord through David's mouth: 'My flesh has blossomed anew']

No rubrics are included in the Middle High German source text. In manuscript H, on the other hand, they have been consistently inserted; in the previous section we saw that they were available from the very outset in the history of the *Limburg sermons* tradition. Manuscript A does have a rubric, but is resolved in an entirely different way: *Von der gothait und der mentschait únsers herren* [Concerning the divine and human nature of our Lord].[44] These headers were presumably invented by the compiler of this manuscript, Albrecht der Kolbe.

That the author of the Middle Dutch text was on the whole conscientious in his methodology appears from the way in which in Ls. 22 he dealt with the Latin theme from his source. If he had followed the *St. Georgen sermon* slavishly, then he would have had to translate *caro* with *lif* [body], or something of that nature. But in translating this he apparently also looked at the Latin and in so doing arrived at the much more accurate *vlesch* [flesh]. The translator is constantly making such small corrections which have the effect of rendering a much more streamlined whole, without doing any violence to the essence of the original *St. Georgen sermon*.

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[41] In Rieder 1908, 304–306, the text of Rd. 70 is printed in its entirety from both ms. A and ms. G.
[42] Rieder 1908, 304:19–20.
[43] Kern 1895, 406:10–12.
[44] Rieder 1908, 304:1.

Further on in Rd. 70, the words Christ addresses to Mary from the cross are cited from the gospel according to John (John 19:26), first in Middle High German, and only afterwards in Latin:

> 'Sihc, liebiu můtir, wa din kint stat.' 'Mulier, ecce filius tuus', daz waz alse vil gesprochin als er spræche: 'Sihe, min liebiu můtir, wie ich stan; mir sint mine fůze an daz crúce geheftet mit dien scharphen nagiln, daz ich dich niht mach gefůren ze herberge. Mir sint mine hende an daz crúce genagilot, daz ich dir dine trehine enphahin niht enmach. Mir ist min blůt gevlozin von mime hercen, daz min munt niut mach gesprechin, daz ich dich, liebiu můtir, muge getrŏsten'.[45]
>
> ['Behold, dear mother, how your child fares.' 'Woman, behold thy son', this is as much as to say: 'Behold, my dear mother, my condition; my feet are fastened to the cross with sharp nails so that I might not lead you to a shelter. My hands are nailed to the cross so that I might not receive your tears. My blood has been spilled from my heart so that I am unable to speak, and thus I may not, dear mother, console you.']

The author of the Middle High German text has interpreted this very familiar biblical passage in an unconventional way. According to the usual interpretation, the son referred to here is taken to be John, but the author of Rd. 70 is of the opinion that Christ is referring here to himself and his own state of suffering, which is almost more than his mother can bear. It appears as if the Middle Dutch translator himself realized the unconventional nature of this interpretation, for he omitted the Latin and translated only the Middle High German version of the passage from John, with its emotional description of Christ's suffering.[46] When subsequently Christ addresses John (John 19:27), Ls. 22 once again includes the Latin from the *Sankt Georgener Predigt* (*Ecce mater tua*). There could be no doubt, of course, about the meaning here: this *mater* is Mary.

At the end of this *Limburg sermon* it may readily be seen how the Middle Dutch translator shaped the conclusion of his texts. In manuscript G, Rd. 70 ends as follows:

> Nu hant ir gemerchit den blůmen gotlichis gewaltes vnde gotlichir schŏnhait. Nu merchin den dritten gotlichir ewichait, daz er ewich ist,

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[45] Rieder 1908, 304:34–305:17.

[46] *'Sech, liue muder, war din kint staet!' Dat was also vele gesproken: 'Sech, live muder, wie ic stae! Mi sin min vute ant cruce genegelt met also scarpen nagelen dat ic di niet ter herbergen geleiden en can. Min hande sin mi genegelt. Ic en can di din oegen niet gedrogen. Min bluet es mi ontfloten van minen herten. In can gespreken nog en can di nit getroesten!'* (Kern 1895, 407:7–12).

> dar an ist enhain ende. Also sunt ir wizsen daz unsir herre got ist ane anegenge vnde ane ende: er ist iemir ewicliche noh engenimet niemir enhain ende.[47]
>
> [Now you have seen the flower of divine power and divine beauty. Now take note of the third (flower) of divine eternity, in that He is eternal, and there is no end to Him. Thus may you know that our Lord God is without beginning and without end: He is ever eternal and will never come to an end.]

In the Middle Dutch translation, this becomes:

> Dits die blume sinre schonheit. Nu suldi mercken sin gotlike ewecheit, dat eweg es, dats sonder ende. Also suldi weten dat die gotlike ewecheit sonder ende es ende oec sonder beginsel. Hi was altoes ende hi es altoes ende hi sal altoes wesen. Siet, dits die blume van sinre ewecheit, ende aldus es Got weder gebloyt. Nu sulwi heme bidden dat hi ons bloyende ende groiende make ende ewelike te blivene met sinre ewecheit. Amen.[48]
>
> [This is the blossom of his beauty. Now you will take note of his divine eternity, which is eternal, that is, without end. Thus you will know that the divine eternity is without end and also without beginning. He has always been, always is, and always shall be. Behold, this is the blossom of his eternity, and in this way has God blossomed again. Now we must pray to Him that he allow us to blossom and thrive and remain with him eternally in his eternal being. Amen.]

Following the virtually literal translation of the conclusion of the source text, this *Limburg sermon* is provided with its own ending, consisting of a conclusion and an exhortation to prayer. Usually, however, the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* is less elaborate and restricts himself to the inclusion of a concluding prayer.[49]

On the whole, the *St. Georgen sermons* are fairly faithfully translated, with the exception of the consistently applied minor streamlining corrections. The Middle Dutch translator's signature is usually to be detected in his opening and concluding formulas. Moreover, he fairly consistently inserted bits of text into the translated *Limburg sermons* which do not appear in the Middle High German, and must therefore have

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[47] Rieder 1908, 306:17–20.

[48] Kern 1895, 408:17–25.

[49] Ls. 14 offers, for example, an entirely different concluding formula: *Aldus es Maria geloeft ane seven dogeden, alse gi gehort hebt. Nu sul wi hare exemplen na volgen hir met wercken, also dat wi ginder met hare besitten dewege rike. Dis helpe ons Maria met haren liven sone Jhesus Cristus. Amen* (Kern 1895, 339:9–13).

been of his own devising. The next example comes from Ls. 11, which is a translation of Rd. 53 (I cite here from manuscript G, because A has too many omissions). The narrative commences at a Psalm verse in which the poet describes how he thought about God and realized that he would only want to return if he could have a place in the 'last ends.' (Ps. 73:17).

> Jntruwan im was daz naizwaz widiruarne, da nah im also not wart, daz er ê niemir wolti irwindin, ê er kôme in die jungestun hailkait gotis. Er sprichit abir, daz er sich uil wndir sere můz arbaitin, ê er ze der hailkait kæme. Unde darumbe sol sich der mentsche arbaitin mit dem ulize der betrahtunge, wan nah der arbait wirt diu sele sůzecliche getrŏstit und der uliz machit die sele hailic.[50]
>
> [Verily, I know not what has befallen him, that he was in such a need for it that he never wished to dispense with it, before he came to God's highest sanctity. He says, however, that he must wondrously labor greatly before he may come to this sanctity. And therefore man must labor with the diligence of contemplation, because after this labor the soul will be consoled sweetly and the diligence renders the soul holy.]

Initially the author of the *Limburg sermon* follows the German text fairly faithfully (paragraph one), next he adds a passage of his own making (paragraph two) and subsequently returns once again to the text of his source (paragraph three).

> Entrowen, heme was dar iet ontmoet dart heme so nolike ombe was dat hi nemmer en woude gekeren eer hi quame in die joncste heilecheit Gots. Hi sprict oec namals dat hi sig vel wonderne sere, ten irsten muste arbeiden derna eer hi ter heilecheit quame. Ende dar ombe sal sig der mensche gerne arbeiden met guden vlite, guder begerden ende guder pensingen.
>
> Nu sin sulke lide ongetruwe in hare arbeit, want alse gearbeit hebben een jaer ogte luttel meer, ende hen Got alse gereet nit en es alse begeren, so verdrit hen hare arbeit ende werpense te rugge ende werden bewilen boser dan te voren. Entrowen, die lide sin onberaden, wantse Gode sbetstes nit en getrůwen ende daden dat hen behort. Got es altoes gereet te dunne dat heme behort.

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[50] G, ff. 55vb–56ra. Manuscript A reads here: *Intrúwen, im waz da naiswaz widervaren dar nach im also not wart. Er sprichet aber daz er sich vil wunder sere dar nach můste arbaiten mit dem flisse, denn wirt dú seke sůsseklichen getrŏstet, und der fliss machet die sele hailig* (Rieder 1908, 205:10–13).

> Want na groter arbeit wert die sile bewilen sutelike getroest alse har tid volcomen es. Nu sulwi ons hauden in guden vlite, want der vlit mact die sile heileg.[51]
>
> [Verily, something happened to him there that was so that he wanted never to return before he entered God's sanctuary in the last ends. He also says afterward that he marvels greatly that he must first labor before he can reach holiness. And for this reason man must eagerly labor with due diligence, with true desire and good consideration. Now it is the case that some are unfaithful in their labor, for when they have labored for a year or a little longer, and God has not been as accommodating as they desire, they regret their labor and turn their backs on it and gradually become more evil than they were before. Verily, these people are foolish, for they do not trust at all in God and do not do as they ought. God is always prepared to do what He ought. For after great labor the soul will be consoled more and more once her time has come. Now let us persist in being diligent, for diligence makes the soul holy.]

The translator wished to impress further upon his readers the need to persevere in their quest for oneness with the divine. He apparently had experience with the initially enthousiastic, who would then quickly give up if God did not immediately visit His heavenly sweetness upon them. Further interpolations in the translated *St. Georgen sermons* reveal him to be someone worried by the lack of discipline in the monasteries, which was apparently an issue of all too frequent concern.[52]

It is especially through such original interpolations in the translated *St. Georgen sermons* that we gain insight into the attitudes of the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*. Between the lines of the directly translated text we may perceive the temperament of the monastic reformer. Although the sixteen *Limburg sermons* that were added to the translated *St. Georgen sermons* speak for themselves as far as their contents are concerned, it is not possible to identify there the fingerprints of the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*. After all, here we can hardly discern anything about his methods as a translator or adaptor. The traces of adaptation we find in the translated *St. Georgen sermons* are therefore of the utmost importance for our attempts to gain insight into the character of the translator/

[51] Kern 1895, 305:22–306:8.

[52] Cf. as well a passage in Ls. 4, in which the listeners are exhorted to obedience (Kern 1895, 214:10–13). The fairly long, independent conclusion of Ls. 19 (Kern 1895, 392:7–15) contains an attack on cold-hearted, dishonest religious. In Ls. 25 it is said of the cedar that its taste keeps snakes at bay; here, more so than in Rd. 73, it is stressed that the snakes stand for 'the wrong people' (Kern 1895, 418:23–419:2). A number of similar passages from Ls. 31 are discussed in § 2.3.

compilator. He reveals himself to be an inspired person, possessed of a religious ideal that proved not so easy to realise in actual practice.

It must have been the compiler/translator's need for complete texts, identified previously, which compelled him on a couple of occasions to combine two short *St. Georgen sermons* into one independent *Limburg sermon*.[53] Apparently, texts that were too short did not fit into the plan of the Middle Dutch bundle; the preoccupation with the length of the texts exhibited in the table of contents points to this as well. The same strategy was not always employed when two Middle High German sermons were fused into one new *Limburg sermon*. The most straightforward method consisted of coupling two sermons, similar in content, by means of a simple trick. This is the technique employed in Ls. 21, *Dets van onser vrouwen ende gelict hare eenre wingart reven* [This concerns our Lady and she is like a vine (in a vineyard)], which consists of Rd. 64 and Rd. 69. No doubt the translator noticed that both *St. Georgen sermons* were not only short, but moreover had the same theme: *Ego quasi vitis fructificavi* ('As the vine I have brought forth a pleasant odour'; Sirach 24:23). Rd. 64 puts this phrase from Ecclesiasticus in the mouth of Mary, after which follows an allegory of Mary as a blossoming vine. A number of characteristic features of this vine are first discussed, followed by the red, white, and spiced wines the vine produces. Next we are presented with the three chalices, of silver, gold, and saphire, from which the wine is drunk. The narrative continues with series of five and three virtues, respectively, that a virtuous person should practice. Rd. 69 relates the theme to Mary, but associates the seven leaves on the vine with the seven words that the tradition attributes to Mary.

In Ls. 21, both Middle High German source texts—first Rd. 64, then Rd. 69—are deftly joined together by means of a newly composed transitional passage:

> Ay sekerlike, van alle desen dogeden was die sute Maria wale ene wingart reve die altoes bloyde ende vrogtberegt was, want si druchse geheel in hare. Dese edel reve heft oec seven loevere, ende bi din seven loeveren verstawi seven wort die di sute Maria sprac.[54]
>
> [Ah, verity in all of these virtues was the blessed Mary a vine in the vineyard that was always in bloom and bearing fruit, for she bore it all

[53] For more on the fusion of two *SGP* into one *LS*, see Lüders 1958, 55 and 58–59, Frühwald 1963, 51–52 and Seidel 2003, 173 and 241–242.

[54] Kern 1895, 404:1–5.

> within her. This noble vine also has seven leaves, and by these seven leaves we are to understand seven words that the blessed Mary spoke.]

The last sentence here is a paraphrase of the opening lines of Rd. 69, creating a seamless transition to the text of that sermon. In this way, and with a minimum of effort, two texts apparently deemed to be too short are transformed into a new *Limburg sermon*, one that now conforms to the standards set by the translator. Naturally he did not fail to conclude this one with a sentence of his own devising: *Dis helpe ons Maria, die suete reve. Amen*.[55] [May Mary, the sweet vine, help us in this. Amen].

Ls. 29, *Dit berigt ons we met gode wonen sal* [This informs about who will dwell with God], was compiled in similar fasion. Here two *St. Georgen sermons* (Rd. 66 and 75) are joined under the banner of the theme of the first: *Domine, quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo* ('Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle?'; Ps. 15:1). Rd. 66 explains that those who are unblemished may dwell in God's house and distinguishes three kinds of blemish: original sin, deadly sin, and venal sin. The person who is able to avoid these sins will reap a threefold reward. In manuscript H this passage concludes with the phrase, *dar ons Got kurtelike tue brenge. Amen*, [where God will bring us shortly] which does not appear in Rd. 66.[56] *Gi sult weten*, continues the Middle Dutch text bluntly, *dat op ertrike sin drirehande minnen die di meeste sin* [You must know that on earth there are three chief manners of love].[57] These three manners are 1) the love between a mother and child, 2) the love between a man and a woman, and 3) the love between the body and the soul. This entire triad on love has been lifted from Rd. 75, but can hardly be associated thematically with Rd. 66. Nor is it readily related to the theme from the Psalms. This is without doubt the least successful compilation by the translator of the *Limburg sermons*. He apparently sought to rework both of these *St. Georgen sermons* completely, but did so according to his own criteria of form. Only by joining the shorter Rd. 66 and Rd. 75 together could he create a text of acceptable length. Provide it with a Latin theme and its own concluding formula, and this composite text fits more or less into the corpus. But it will be no coincidence that Ls. 29 does not receive a value judgment in the table of contents of MS H: *Det berigt*

[55] Kern 1895, 406:9.
[56] Kern 1895, 435:14–15.
[57] Kern 1895, 435:16.

ons wie met Gode wonen sal in sinen palais ende es ale cort [This informs us about who will dwell with God in his palace, and is very brief].[58]

A somewhat more complex method of creating a new *Limburg sermon* out of two *St. Georgen sermons* is the rearrangement of the contents of one or more texts in a kind of mosaic technique. This procedure has been employed in two *Limburg sermons*, namely Ls. 23 and Ls. 26. Ls. 23 presents a large part of Rd. 71, but arranged in a different order. The original Middle High German text gives the impression of having been compiled from two separate sermons. At the outset four joys are distinguished, based on the theme from Isaiah in which Jerusalem is exhorted to rejoice. These four virtues, however, are hardly developed. Further on in Rd. 71 four joys are once again discussed, but this time based upon Psalm 35:9, *Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tuae et torrente voluntatis tuae potabis eos* ('They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure'). Here the four virtues are linked with drunkenness. The inconsistent construction of Rd. 71 did not go unnoticed by the meticulous Middle Dutch translator. He constructed a new text based on the German one, but provided it with a lucid sermon structure. Ls. 23 puts the Psalm theme, *Inebriabuntur*, at the fore—only this single Latin word is quoted, after which follows the Middle Dutch translation of the psalm—and explicates only the four joys of inebriation. Only one passage from the first series of four was considered fitting enough to be retained.[59] It may be that this focus on the motive of spiritual drunkennes is connected to the previously identified preference for bridal and *minne* mysticism.

Ls. 26, *Dets van der dogter van Syon, dats van der heileger selen* [This concerns the daughter of Syon, that is, the souls of the holy ones] has the most complex structure of the four composite *Limburg sermons*. The framework of the text is provided by Rd. 44, into which the contents of Rd. 74 have for the most part been interpolated. The theme of the Middle Dutch text has been taken from Rd. 44. Manuscript G gives this theme as *Dicite filie Syon ecce rex tuus veniet tibi* ('tell the daughter of Sion: Behold thy King cometh'; Isaiah 62:11).[60] The Vulgate reads *salvator* here, rather than *rex* (*dicite filiae Sion ecce salvator tuus venit*); I cannot delve further into the issue of the sources of the biblical citations in

[58] Kern 1895, 179:27–28.
[59] Cf. Lüders 1958, 57–58 and 242.
[60] G, f. 24rb.

these sermons here, however. The theme of Rd. 74, then, announces the coming of the King. First it is explained who is coming—God's son—and then how he is coming—soft as the sweet dew in May—and finally how He is to be received—as He had been on Palm Sunday in Jerusalem. Then the people had lain clothing on the road so that Jesus could ride over them on his ass. They threw flower petals, grass and branches on the road and broke into new song. Naturally, every one of these elements is allegorized.

The summary reference from Rd. 44 to the people strewing flower petals on the road provided the ideal opportunity for incorporating the very brief Rd. 74 into the *Limburg sermons* corpus. For this text, little more than an allegorical sketch, explains why it is that ecclesiastics resemble flowers: 1) the flower grows in virtue, 2) the flower smells pleasant, 3) the flower is pleasing to the eye, and 4) the flower is easy to pluck.

Although the text of Rd 44 does not state explicitly that it is ecclesiastics who are cheering Jesus, this flower allegory about spirituality does fit well into the narrative, given the fact that this Middle High German text was clearly written for people leading a monastic life. The translation of Rd. 74 is effectively interrupted by *Siet, dit sien die blumen die gi breken ende spreiden sult jhegen din hogen coninc* [Behold, these are the flowers that you break and strew before your high King].[61] The flower allegory is thus tied to the sermon's theme and Rd. 74 may then be inserted in its entirety. Thereafter the thread of Rd. 44 is once again taken up and the grass, the (olive!) branches and the song of praise are thematized. In this way a new, cohesive Middle Dutch text was created, and it too was brought to a close with a prayer.

These four examples demonstrate that the translator of the *Limburg sermons* was perfectly capable, using compilation and mosaic techniques, of creating new texts out of previously exisiting material. This 'Mosaikbildung' procedure would truly come into its own, especially in Middle High German, but also in the Middle Dutch mystical prose tradition, in the fourteenth century.[62] The composite and mosaic texts in the *Limburg sermons* constitute, then, early examples of this. Eva Lüders, who was not aware of the early dating of H, considered the appearance of these composite *Limburg sermons* a unique phenomenon within the entire *St. Georgen sermons*-tradition: 'Die Mosaike in H wollen

[61] Kern 1895, 422:17–19.
[62] On the German mosaic treatise, see Spamer 1910.

uns [...] als eine individuelle Note und ein sehr selbständiges Vorgehen des Kompilators von H anmuten' [The mosaics in H impress us [...] as a note of individuality and an extremely independent initiative on the part of the compiler of H].[63] Traces of this kind of method are incidently found in one or two of the *St. Georgen sermons*, such as, for example, in Rd. 60, in which an older palm tree allegory is combined with a series of quotations from older Middle High German works (§ 2.3). The fifteenth-century corpus manuscript Am constitutes a high-point in the application of this mosaic technique within the *Limburg sermons*-tradition. Here a number of disparate *Limburg sermons*—among which the mosaic sermons Ls. 21 and 26 themselves—are used as the basis for entirely new compositions.

Finally, there is one more striking aspect of Ls. 26. At the end of the flower allegory from Rd. 74, the Middle Dutch text changes course somewhat. In this loose paraphrase we find the following lines, which have no parallel in the German:

> Vel lide wouden wale Got sin met Gode in der glorien, mar luttel gut lide willen mensche werden met heme in der tribulatien ende in den vernoye dar hi mensche binnen was.[64]
>
> [Many people wish to be God with God in glory, but few good people wish to be human with Him in the tribulations and suffering He experienced while a man.]

M.H. van der Zeyde recognized this as a passage from Hadewijch's Letter 6.[65] The passage in question reads as follows in the Letter:

> Wi willen alle wel God met Gode wesen, mer, wet God, luttel es onser die mensche met siere minscheit wille leven ende sijn cruce met hem willen draghen ende met hem ane den cruce willen staen ende die scout der menscheit volghelden.[66]
>
> [We all indeed wish to be God with God; but God knows there are few of us who want to live as men with his Humanity, or want to carry his cross with him, or want to hang on the cross with Him, and pay humanity's debt to the full.] [67]

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[63] Lüders 1958, 58–59.
[64] Kern 1895, 422:7–10.
[65] Van der Zeyde 1934, 131; cf. Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 2, 54.
[66] Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 64:230–235.
[67] Transl. Hart 1980, 61. All translations of Hadewijch are from this work.

Robrecht Lievens has since rightly observed that the similarity between the two is fairly superficial. He is of the opinion that Letter 6 and Ls. 26 have both drawn independently from a patristic author, such as Bernard of Clairvaux.[68] This is not to deny that passages from Hadewijch's Letters do indeed appear with some frequency in the *Limburg sermons*, especially in the sixteen interpolated sermons. In the case of Ls. 26, though, the overlap falls precisely at that point where the translator of the *Limburg sermons* diverges from his source, Rd. 74. The intertextual connection between the Letters of Hadewijch and the *Limburg sermons* came about within the Middle Dutch tradition, not in the earlier, German one.[69] The compiler/translator of the *Limburg sermons* must have been familiar with certain Middle Dutch texts that also appear in the corpus of Hadewijch's letters. (see § 4.2).

2.3 This Is the Book of the Palm Tree *(Ls. 31)*

The most important signs of adaptation left behind by the Middle Dutch translator in the translated *St. Georgen sermons* are to be found in *Dbuec van den palmboeme* [The Book of the Palm Tree; a translation of this text is included here as Appendix V].[70] Ls. 31 is a member of a well-studied family of texts, which in Germanistic and Netherlandic studies usually bears the title, 'Palm Tree treatise'.[71] The source of this textual tradition lies in Northern France (Picardy?), where before 1220 an anonymous Old French text came into being under the title *Le palmier*, or *Le livre du paumier*.[72] The term 'Palm Tree treatise' is somewhat misleading, as Michel Zink justly includes it in the corpus of early Old

[68] Lievens 1958, 209 n. 13.

[69] Cf. Lüders 1958, 59.

[70] The fairly extensive revisions this text has undergone may well be the reason that Ls. 31 occupies a different slot in the order of sermons in the *LS* than it does in the *SGP*. As Rd. 60 we would have expected to find the Palm Tree treatise situated between Ls. 18 (Rd. 59) and Ls. 19 (Rd. 61), but the compiler of the *LS* placed this highly valued work at the very end of the block of translated *SGP* (see Appendix II).

[71] The most penetrating study of this oldest group of texts is Fleischer 1976, where manuscript H is discussed on pp. 157–162; a number of new insights are provided by Reynaert 1978, Seidel 2003, 151, 221–223 and 248–250 and Scheepsma 2001b. There are many other palm tree allegories besides the 'Palm Tree treatise' discussed here; for these, see Fleischer 1969. Fleischer 1989 provides a brief survey of the entire palm tree tradition in German and Dutch.

[72] Ed. Christ 1926.

French sermon literature.[73] This text is based on Song of Songs 7:8 *Dixi ascendam in palmam adprehendam fructus eius* ('I said: I will go up into the palm tree, and will take hold of the fruit thereof'; Song of Songs 7:8). The imagery of the palm tree and the fruit it bears, taken from the sermon's theme, is used to develop a fairly straightforward mystical doctrine. The author links the seven branches of the palm tree to the seven virtues necessary to lead the contemplative life. Only once he has acquired them all, can one reach the top of the tree. It is there that the fruits may be plucked: coming face-to-face with Christ. On each branch there is a bird and a blossom, each of which illustrates the virtue in question in their own way. Thus it is that on the third branch, which stands for penitence, we find the swan and the lily. The bird lifts its voice in song when it feels death approaching, while the flower sybolizes chastity and the will to work hard.

> Ls. 31 is one of the most widely disseminated *Limburg sermons*. Besides H, it appears in the corpus in manuscripts B1, ff. 63v–75r, Br1, ff. 89r–103v and W2, ff. 198r–231r. In addition, there is a small 'Streuüberlieferung': ms. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, II 112 (ca. 1460; Beghards of St. Bartholomew, Maastricht) ff. 14v–15v contain an excerpt;[74] ms. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 133 G 1 (ca. 1460; Poor Clares of Hoogstraten), ff. 14r–37v contain the entire text.[75]

The oldest version of this palm tree allegory is referred to in the scholarship as Redaction E, after a manuscript from Erfurt containing the Latin version of the Palm Tree treatise, the *Palma contemplationis*.[76] Initially scholars were convinced by the notion that this was an originally Latin text, but thanks to J. Reynaert, the Old French origins of Redaction E have been firmly established.[77] A Latin translation must quickly have been made of it, whereby the Palm Tree treatise was soon disseminated over a wide area. In the German-speaking area two vernacular versions of Redaction E were composed, both of which may be traced back to the Latin *Palma contemplationis*. One of these is the anonymous *Baumgarten*, an orchard allegory in the Alsace dialect previously errone-

[73] Zink 1976, 55–56 and 458 (nr. 30).

[74] The passage in question is Kern 1895, 456:10–457:12. On the ms. see Seidel 2003, 136 and Stooker & Verbeij 1997, vol. 2, no. 867.

[75] See Seidel 2003, 138 and Stooker & Verbeij 1997, vol. 1, no. 683.

[76] For the Latin *Palma contemplationis* see Strauch 1924 (also containing an edition of ms. Erfurt, Wissenschaftliche Bibliothek der Stadt, Amplon. 12° 8, ff. 127r–131r).

[77] Reynaert 1978, 296–310.

ously attributed to Konrad von Weißenburg.[78] A direct Middle High German (Bavarian) translation of Redaction E was not composed until the fifteenth century, once again presumably based on the Latin model.[79] Compared to that, the Middle Dutch Redaction E is considerably older, for it was composed in the first half of the fourteenth century, based on the original Old French text.

> The oldest manuscript containing the Middle Dutch Redaction E of the Palm Tree treatise is Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 19.565, ff. 2r–16r, which dates to the second quarter of the fourteenth century, and based on its dialect, comes from Brabant. (fig. 11).[80] About a century later, according to its mark of ownership, it belonged to a woman by the name of Lievijn Longijn. According to Walter Simons, a personal *ex libris* of this kind points to its having been among the beguines.[81]

The second thirteenth-century German adaptation of the *Palma contemplationis* is, then, Rd. 60, previously referred to as Redaction G of the Palm Tree treatise. Today we prefer to speak of Redaction SG, which expresses better the fact that this text is imbedded in the *St. Georgen sermons*. It is unclear whether Redaction SG was specially written with an eye to inclusion in the *St. Georgen sermons*-cyclus, or whether it had led a previous, independent existence.[82]

Initially, Rd. 60 follows the pattern of Redaction E, with its seven branches, seven birds and seven flowers, albeit with some slight changes. But where the original text in the seventh branch only briefly touches upon the theme of contemplation, redaction SG interpolates a lengthy exposition, in which the encounter between bride and bridegroom from the Song of Songs is described in great detail. This second part must have been compiled from previously existing Middle High German texts concerning the Song of Songs, but thus far only one of these has been

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[78] On the *Baumgarten* see Schmidtke 1982, 35–36 (no. 10) and 174–178, and Schmidtke 1984.

[79] Fleischer 1976, 84–87.

[80] Part I of Reynaert 1978 provides an overview of the Middle Dutch manuscripts, part II an edition of ms. Brussels 19.565 and part III an analysis of the relationship between the Middle Dutch text, the *Palma contemplationis* and *Le palmier*. On this Brussels ms., see Reynaert 1978, 13–17; for the current dating, see Kwakkel & Mulder 2001, 159.

[81] Simons 2004, 104–105.

[82] Schmidtke 1982, 34–35 (no. 9) considers the second part of the SG redaction to be an independent text, because there exist two manuscripts that preserve this piece separately. Seidel 2003, 233–234, on the other hand, demonstrates that both manuscripts are independent from Rd. 60 and thus cannot be used as evidence for a transmission outside the *SGP* tradition.

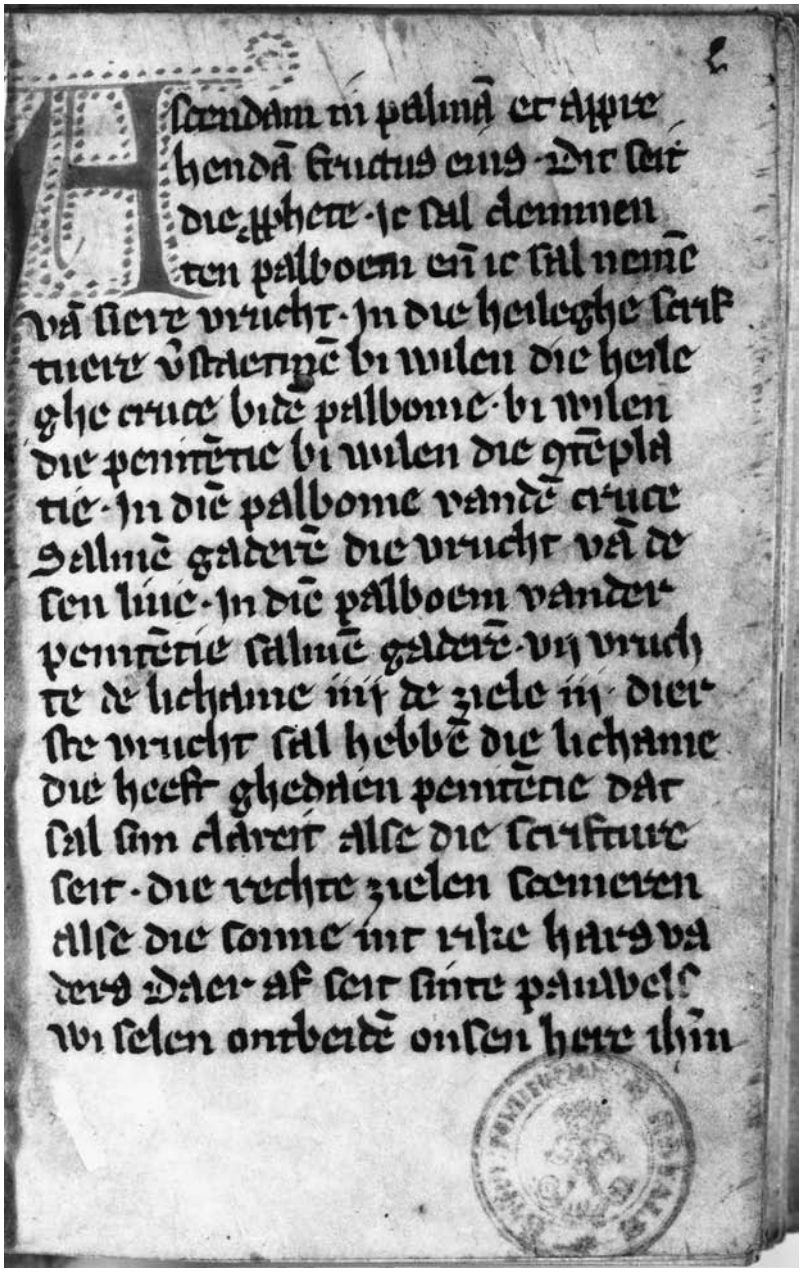

Fig. 11. MS Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 19.565, f. 2r. Opening leaf of the Middle Dutch Redaction E of the Palm Tree treatise.

identified. That source is none other than the *Sankt Trudperter Hohelied*, the splendid commentary on the Song of Songs that was written during the course of the twelfth century for a circle of female Benedictines.[83] Rd. 60 constitues the only evidence of reception of this Song of Songs adaptation in all of Middle German literature.[84] Frühwald, incidentally, maintains that it is only thanks to its having borrowed from the *Sankt Trudperter Hohelied* that redaction SG may be included among the corpus of mystical literature at all.[85]

> There has been little discussion about the Benedictine background of the *Sankt Trudperter Hohelied*; the composition of this Song of Songs commentary has been linked to the twelfth-century reform movement of Hirsau. Where the text was written, however, is unclear. Friedrich Ohly thought it a near certainty that the place of origin was the monastery Admont in Steiermark (Styria) (Austria), a localisation that remained intact up to his posthumously published edition of the *Sankt Trudperter Hohelied*.[86] Urban Küsters advanced the monastery of St Georgen in the Black Forest as a candidate, in particluar because Redaction SG of the Palm Tree treatise was taken from the *Sankt Trudperter Hohelied*. Küsters received some support from Ruh, but now that Seidel has once again emphatically demonstrated that manuscript G was not written at St Georgen, this hypothesis has lost its persuasiveness.[87]

The motif of the palm tree left an early impression on iconography and manuscript illumination, especially in the so-called *Rothschild Canticles* (MS New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, MS 404) of ca. 1300.[88] This intriguing codex was in all likelihood the private possession of a pious lady, perhaps a nun. Based on art historical and paleographical features, the *Rothschild Canticles* may be localised in the southern Netherlands. It seems reasonable to assume that the undoubtedly wealthy lady who commissioned the work came

[83] Ed. Ohly 1998, with an exhaustive introduction and documentation. The previous edition, Menhardt 1934, vol. 1, 47–57 was the first to call attention to the connection between Rd. 60 and Ls. 31. For a brief treatment of the *Sankt Trudperter Hohelied* see Ohly 1995; cf. also Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 22–53.

[84] Küsters 1985, 64–99.

[85] Frühwald 1963, 129–132; cf. Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 28–29.

[86] Ohly 1998, 328.

[87] Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 24–25 and Seidel 2003, 221–224, respectively.

[88] Hamburger 1990 is devoted entirely to this manuscript and also contains many pictures; cf. Smeyers 1998, 131–133 and Scheepsma 2001a. The complete manuscript, in full color, can be consulted at http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/dl_crosscollex/SearchExecXC.asp.

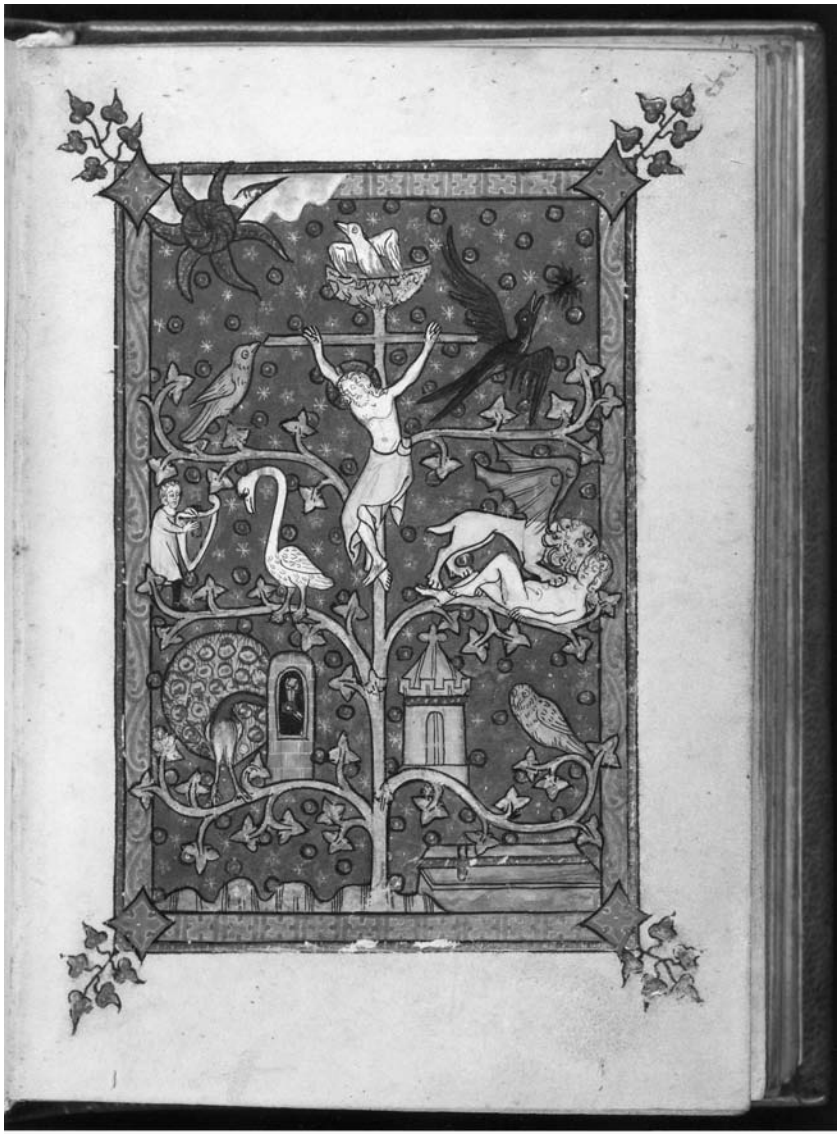

Fig. 12. MS New Haven, Beinecke Rare Manuscript Library, MS. 404, f. 5r. The mystical palm tree in the *Rothschild Canticles*.

from the same region.[89] This fascinating manuscript is especially famous for its spectacular figurative depictions of abstract themes from mystical theology, along with numerous other illustrations of the highest quality. The manuscript containing the *Rothschild Canticles* was designed as a book of devotion for private meditation, whereby text and image complement each other. It is especially in the first part that we encounter a lay-out whereby on the left appear citations from religious literature, and on the right a full-page illumination. On f. 5r of this unique book of devotion, we find a full-page illustration of the *Palma contemplationis*, which is beyond any doubt connected to the literary tradition of the Palm Tree treatise (fig. 12).[90] The relatively stylized drawn tree has seven branches upon which are perched the seven birds from the text. The corresponding text, however, is lacking in the manuscript. Apparently the motif of the mystical palm tree was so well known—at least to whoever commissioned the book—that the miniaturist of the *Rothschild Canticles* could represent it without any further explication.

> Jeffrey Hamburger maintains that the miniaturist of the *Rothschild Canticles* had the text of Redaction SG in front of him, and which as far as we know has survived only in Middle High German and Middle Dutch. In particular the peacock, the bird on the third branch, is depicted in the text looking into a mirror he wears on his head (which symbolises his crown). In the *Rothschild Canticles* miniature the bird is sticking his head into a peculiar construction, in which according to Hamburger the mirror is hidden. Unfortunately no trace of the mirror can be seen, rendering this interpretation less than air-tight. Sometimes, moreover, the illustration seems to follow Redaction E. In *Rothschild Canticles* miniature, the top of the palm tree is transformed into into the cross of Christ. The comparison between palm tree and cross does appear in Redaction E, but not in Redaction SG. The miniature departs from both literary traditions by failing to depict the seven flowers.[91] All in all it would seem wiser to me not to associate this minature too closely with either of these two illustrations, but rather to assume that the motif of the *Palma contemplationis* was so well

[89] Hamburger 1990, 8–17 and 155–167, suspects there was a female patron from the Rhine area, given the presence of a number of motifs known especially from the Middle High German tradition. I myself have tried to argue that these themes were also known in the southern Netherlands and northern France, so that the woman who commissioned the *Rothschild Canticles* might also be looked for there (Scheepsma 2001a).

[90] A reproduction of the opening ff. 4v–5r may be found in Hamburger 1990, fig. 5; a colour reproduction of the mystical palm tree in Smeyers 1998, 132. There is another, much younger illustration of the mystical palm tree, namely a woodcut in an incunable from Augsburg (see the figure in Strauch 1924, after p. 374 and Fleischer 1976, 5).

[91] Cf. Scheepsma 2001a, 287–288.

known in mystical circles of the thirteenth century that there existed a variety of literary and iconographical representations of it.

In the second part of Ls. 31, where the inner coherence of Redaction SG was of a lesser degree, the Middle Dutch translator has inserted a number of important adaptations. In this section he interpolated some five longer passages of his own making.[92] That these interpolations were by the hand of the translator of the *Limburg sermons*, and not additions by the compilers of manuscript H, is evident by the fact that they appear in other corpus manuscripts.[93] These long additions to Ls. 31 are of the utmost importance for our insights into the mind-set of the translator of the *Limburg sermons*. In the previous section we already observed that he gave regular warnings against elements that could pose a threat to a religious community from the inside. The same kind of thing occurs here a number of times. These interpolations are a further indication of a great interest in spirituality of a mystical bent; we shall return to this in greater detail in chapter four (§ 4.3).

For his criticism of the weak elements that threaten a religious community from within, the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* frequently employs very sharp terms in Ls. 31. The Middle High German redaction SG poses the question of who shall be the recipients of God's grace. The author begins by excluding a couple of important categories.[94]

> Untrúwen, daz sint die die durnehtiges und demůtiges hercen sint. Ez ensint niut die valschin gaistliche noh sint die gelichsendin. Ez sint och niht die hindir rede spulgint unde virkerer. Ez sint die demůtiges hercen sint unde die sich selbin virwerfent unde andir liute irhŏhint. Daz sint die, dien Got zarton wil mit siner gnade.[95]
>
> [Verily, it is those who are possessed of the most perfect and humble hearts. It is not those who are false clerics, nor hypocrites. Nor, indeed, those who use to slander or deceivers. Rather it is those who are of

[92] The extensive interpolations in Ls. 31 have been published in their entirety and explicated in Scheepsma 2001b; I limit myself here to references to relevant passages.

[93] Cf. Scheepsma 2001b, 163 on the Middle Dutch interpolations in Ls. 31 that appear in B1, Br1 and W2; Lievens 1958, 209–210 provides a number of passages in the Letters that agree with Br1.

[94] The text of Rd. 60 from ms. G has been published in its entirety in Fleischer 1976, 281–323 (with numerous variants in the notes); Rieder 1908, 260–276 prints only the second, most heavily altered portion. I cite from Rieder 1908 here because that edition is the easiest to reproduce typographically.

[95] Rieder 1908, 274:25–29 (ms. G); cf. Fleischer 1976, 289:504–512.

humble heart and who humble themselves and exalt others. Those are the ones who God will caress with His grace.]

What apparently caught the Middle Dutch translator's eye was the phrase *valschin gaistliche*, which compelled him to expand this passage into a powerful warning against the actions of false ecclesiastics in religious communities:

Entruwen, dassin dinge ende doetmudege herten. Hen sin engene valsche getekende lide, hen sin engene achtersprakere nog verkere, hen sin engene ypocriten nog geveesde herten, hen sin nit die dopbelens plegen. Sulke dobbelaren plegen dasse al den dag arbeiden utermaten sere ombe haren loen, ende alsine hebben so ganse savons in taverne ende verdobbelen din loen ende meer dertue.[96] Also duen sulke lide die gestelic teken dragen: si vasten, si waken, si beden, si weinen, si venien ende driven groet arbeit, ende comt bi wilen dassit al verlisen overmits ene quade genugde ende ene clene solatie dise nemen ut menschen die se verkoren hebben in valscher genugden. Ay sekerlike, sin sien nit wale beraden, want gestelike lide sin souden engene solatie nemen ut engenen menschen dan in Gode allene. Ende sin duns oc nit, want degene die solatie ende genugde nemen ut menschen en sin nit gestelike. Al dragense gestelic abijt, si dragent te haren verdumenisse, want si sin valsche ypocriten ende toenen dasse nit en sien. Dint růrt, hi huder sich vore, want sin dragen nit dinge nog doetmudege herte dat Got sirt ende edelt met sinre genaden.[97]

[Verily, those are the complete and humble of heart. They are not those marked by false signs of religion, they are neither backbiters nor deceivers, they are neither hypocrites nor those with dissembling hearts, nor is it those who play at dice. These dice players are wont to work hard all day long for their wages, and when they have them, they go at night to the taverns and gamble all of their earnings away, and then some. Thus do those who bear the outward signs of religion: they fast, they hold vigils, they pray, they cry, they genuflect and exert themselves greatly, and sometimes it comes to pass that they negate all of this with one false pleasure and one small consolation that they take in people from whom they derive false pleasure. Ah! To be sure, they are not well advised, for religious should seek no consolation in anyone other than God alone. Nor do they do so, for those who seek consolation from men are no religious. Though they wear a religious habit, they wear it to their damnation, for they are false hypocrites and they prove that they are not religious. Whoever this applies to should be on his guard, for they do not bear the humble heart that God adorns and enobles with his mercy.]

[96] On the terms *dopbelens, dobbelaren* and *verdobbelen* cf. Peeters 1973, 292–293, n. 5; according to Peeters, the concept has here approximately the same pejorative meaning as *verkwanselen* in Hadewijch's Poem in Stanzas 30.

[97] Kern 1895, 461:20–462:16.

False ecclesiastics who pin their hopes on people rather than God irrevocably lower the spiritual level of a religious community. The compiler of the *Limburg sermons* apparently thought it necessary to point this out with extra emphasis. The intensity of his tone leads one to suspect that he feared such elements existed in the circle for which he made his compilation.

Weak brothers (or sisters) always constitute a great danger for religious communities with high spiritual aspirations. We therefore find warnings against the actions of servants of the devil in all kinds of related texts. In the *Boec der minnen*, the fourth degree of contemplation consists of enduring *vernoij*, or sorrow. The author observes that the sorrow inflicted by strangers is easier to endure than that inflicted by friends. He follows this with a stern warning against untrustworthy members of a religious community:

> Zummighe lude zijn zwart ende leetlijc: dat zijn de ghene dye haren lichame pinighen in quatheden te volbringhene, alze roeveren ende anders onrechte lude. Oec zijnt de ypocriten dye haren lichame van buten castien mit vastene ende mit wakene, up dat zi gůt scinen van buten, mar zi in der wareyt quat zijn. Deze zijn zwart ende leetlijc: zwart an den lichame, leetlich an der zeylen.[98]
>
> [Some people are black and ugly: these are the ones who hurt their bodies in performing evils, such as thieves and other criminals. Among them are also the hypocrites who punish their bodies externally with fasting and vigils, so that their bodies shine on the outside, but in truth they are evil. They are black and ugly: black of body, ugly of soul.]

In Poem in Couplets 18—which is no longer considered an authentic work of Hadewijch's—such hypocritical clergy are also taken to task: *Menich ypocrite / Gheet in abite / Van goeden lieden*; */ Maer buten scone / Ende binnen hone / Dat en mach niet dieden* [Many a hypocrite wears the habit of a good person, but fair on the outside and ugly on the inside, that is not good].[99]

That the question of the false ecclesiastic concerned him greatly appears further from our Middle Dutch translator's next interpolation. The German text describes the state of rest that occurs when the loving soul surrenders to the Bridegroom in silent prayer. In describing the state of grace she then achieves, Rd. 60 states that there is *enhain*

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[98] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 36:10–15.

[99] Van Mierlo 1952, 104:253–258. Cf. Schweitzer 1997, 193. On the authenticity of the Poems in Couplets, see e.g. Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 182.

velsch [nothing false].[100] The word *velsch* must once again have rung a bell with the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*—even though there is here no connection whatsoever with religious status—for he launches yet another attack at ecclesiastics with false intentions.

> Ende bi dir suttecheit en es engeen vals wanc. Alle ondocht ende alle valscheit es dar ut gescheiden ende es gesirt met himelschen dogeden. Susdans menschen wort ende werc ende al sin leven es onder anderen liden een bloyende paradis van dogeden ende van ligten levene. Nogtan wert hi bi wilen begrepen van sinre valscher geselscap. Ende dans engeen wonder, want hets der guder gewonheit dasse doegen om die gerechtecheit Gots ende es hen oec een geredenisse ter volmaectheit ende opent hen haren wech ten dogeden ende ter overster volmaectheit. Alle di gene die staende sin na volmaectheide die sulen ernstelike arbeiden ende oec wislike huden dat Got in hen ordenert. Want het besluet clene dat mi tguet arbeit ende qualike verteert ogt verlist.[101]
>
> [And that sweetness is unwavering. All vice and falseness has been banished and she is adorned with heavenly virtues. To other people the words and deeds, the entire life of such folk seem a flourishing paradise of virtue and enlightened living. Nevertheless they are sometimes attacked by their false comrades. And that is hardly surprising, for it is the lot of the good that they suffer for the greater righteousness of God, and it prepares them for perfection and opens up for them the path to virtue and to utter perfection. All those who desire to achieve perfection must first toil earnestly and pay heed to what God ordains for them. For it avails me little to waste my good labor and lose my hard-won harvest.]

He offers here a motivation for the actions of such dubious folk. They are part of a divine plan, for they cause those who strive after perfection no end of suffering, so that they may thereby be purified. Whoever wishes to achieve perfection must, like Christ, suffer greatly in the name of God's righteousness.

The translator is at his most outspoken at the end of this sermon, which is almost all by his own hand.[102] The text of Rd. 60 ends with a splendid conclusion:

> So wahsit in dir ain bon der haizit Got der wishait, daz ist diu wishait div in der hailigon hercen als in aime ungesihtigen paradýse wirt geborn: mit der vorhte wirt er gesegit, mit der gnade wirt er gefůhtet, mit deme

[100] Rieder 1908, 275:23–26; cf. Fleischer 1976, 290, 539–543.
[101] Kern 1895, 463:17–464:4.
[102] The entire interpolation appears in Kern 1895, 464, 20–466,14; cf. Scheepsma 2001b, 168–169. I cite a few phrases here, as well as in § 4.3.

> smerzin stirbit er, mit der gelǒbe wrzet er, mit der andaht entrinnet er, mit deme trurenne hohet er, mit der girde wahsit er, mit der minne sol er starchin, mit der gedinge grůnet er, mit der beschaidinhait lobet er unde spraitet sine este, mit der zůht blůgit er, mit der tugint bringet er fruht, mit der gedult riffet er, mit deme tode brichit man in, mit der beschǒwide spiset er.[103]
>
> [Thus there grows in you a tree that is called God of wisdom, that is the wisdom that is born in the sacred heart as in an invisible paradise: with fear it is blessed, with grace it is moistened, with pain it dies, with faith it roots, with devotion it comes up, with sorrow it grows high, with desire it increases, with *minne* it is strengthend, with hope it grows green, with humility it gives praise and spreads its branches, with discipline it blooms, with virtue it brings forth fruit, with patience it ripens, with death men chop it down, with contemplation it feeds others]

The translator of the *Limburg sermons* follows the German text only in its introduction of the tree of wisdom, but follows its own course entirely thereafter. At this point he feels the need to warn his readers that it is no easy thing to plant this tree in one's own soul.

> […] so west in di een boem die heit die wisheit Gots. Dats die edele wisheit die in der edelre selen plant ende groit ende bloit ende die edele vrogt brenct dar die sute Jhesus, har brudegom, mede gespist ende gevuet wert. Nu sin vel lide, alse horen spreken van Gode ogte van dogden ogte van der edelheit der selen ogt van der bliscap van himelrike, so woudense wale gut sin—het ware oec wale guts willen wert—mar utermaten cleine willentse dertue duen. Want leider, Got help ons allen, *wi sin alle cranc in dogen ende vliteg in genugden. Ons can luttel so clene denc geletten in vernoye [= verdriet], win leggen minne wal gehouden. Dats grote clenheit, want mi al uren minnen gnug leven soude*.[104]
>
> [Thus there dwells in you a tree called the Wisdom of God. That is a noble kind of wisdom that is planted, grows and thrives in the noble soul and which brings forth the noble fruit with which sweet Jesus, her bridegroom, is fed and nourished. Now, there are many folk who, when they hear talk about God, or about virtue, or about the nobility of the soul, or about the bliss of heaven, (when they hear these things) they would gladly be good—they are certainly worthy of good will)—but very few of them want to do anything about it. For people, God help us all, *we are weak in virtue but zealous in pleasure. Some insignificant thing can annoy and*

[103] Rieder 1908, 275:39–276:3; cf. Fleischer 1976, 290, 560–569.
[104] Kern 1895, 464:19–465:8.

grieve us to such a point that we put Love away and forget to serve her. This is great baseness. For at all hours we must content love by our life.] [105]

As was the case in Ls. 26, and just at the point where the translator went his own way, a phrase slips into his text that we also find in Hadewijch's thirtieth Letter (the passage in question appears in italics).

The Middle Dutch translator saves his harshest criticism for the end of Ls. 31. He takes aim at a category of sceptics who have their doubts about the mystical spirituality practiced by the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* and their intended audience (see § 4.3). The sharp tone of the Middle Dutch interpolations in Ls. 31 consitute a break in style from the German Redaction SG text where, despite the rather lofty contents, the allegory of the palm is developed in a calm and deliberate fashion. The translator did not appreciably alter the contents of these passages, but sharpened his narrative dramatically with warnings that appear to have been based in actual experience. In these interpolations he appears to lapse into colloquial speech out of pure passion. Or is this a deliberate rhetorical move, meant to emulate as closely as possible an actual heated debate? For despite these outbursts, this *Limburg sermon*, too, ends in proper fashion with its own concluding formula, which in this case is rather lengthy.

> Bitwi heme dat hi ons geve desen palmboem op te clemmene ernstelike ende wislike totten oversten telge, dar dewelike raste in legt, ende sin ernstagtech in onser huden ende nemelike in twiveliken saken dar wi engene warheit af en weten. Die bevelen Gode, die als geweldech es, en con wire engene vrome ut getrecken, huden ons doch van der scaden! Dis help ons pater et filius et spiritus sanctus. Amen.[106]
>
> [Let us pray that he allows us to ascend this palm tree diligently and wisely to the topmost branch, where may be found eternal tranquility, and to be diligent in our vigilance, especially in dubious subjects in which we know not the truth. We cannot possibly comprehend the commands of God, who is almighty, let us keep ourselves from from calamity! May he help us in this, pater et filius et spiritus sanctus. Amen.]

The special appreciation given to Ls. 31 in the table of contents in manuscript H may well have something to do with the interpolations in

[105] Hart's translation of the passage from Hadewijch's Letter 20 in italics (Hart 1980, 116: 22).
[106] Kern 1895, 466:6–14.

the Middle Dutch translation. It may even be that this appreciation is specifically linked to the strong case being made in Ls. 31 for a brand of spirituality anchored in a pure spiritual life on the one hand, and mystical love on the other. Both redactions of the Palm Tree treatise appear to have been attractive to religious movements with a mystically oriented spirituality. *Le palmier* is one of the very earliest vernacular texts to address contemplation directly. The reader is led step by step to the seventh and highest branch of the *Palma contemplationis*, where the bride encounters Christ and reposes with him. Franz-Josef Schweitzer maintains that the imagery of the tree and the deep rest that one encounters at the top was especially popular among the Beguines and Beghards.[107] And it was precisely these circles who were suspected of harboring suspect heterodox ideas about the spiritual life.[108]

> Schweitzer's interest in the Palm Tree treatise is connected to his perhaps somewhat speculative theory about the existence of a specifically mystical literature of the Beguine and Beghard movement in the thirteenth century, which, as a result of persecution in the thirteenth century, was compelled to go underground.[109] Schweitzer reports at least two case of a form of mystical ecstasy that is reminiscent of the seventh branch of the Palm Tree treatise. In an inquisition report from 1332, the Beguine Margaretha Pictrix of Schweidnitz (Silesia) describes how she had learned, at her own will, to make her soul better than God had intended it to be. When she arrived at this stage, she rested upon a tree whose name she had forgotten—the *Palma contemplationis*?[110] In the fourteenth-century treatise, *Von dreierlei geistlichem sterben* [Concerning the three spiritual deaths], nine kinds of people are described. Of the ninth and highest category it is said that *sy sind auch allen menschen nücz und trostlich gen got, wan man mag sy gleychen ainem paum, der mit grossen esten und mit fruchten und mit ausgepraittem laub schaden geytt und suesslich speyset alle menschen*.[111] [They are useful and

[107] E.g. Schweitzer 2000, 326.

[108] Against this background it is salient that Fleischer 1976, 213–222 wished to see in the MHG SG redaction a text composed to help reform the female participants in the heresy in the Nördlinger Ries in Swabia (ca. 1270) Given the dating of the *SGP* to before the middle of the thirteenth century, it is a theory that should be abandoned (Seidel 2003, 203).

[109] See Schweitzer 1992 and Schweitzer 2000; The Middle Dutch dialogue *Meester Eckhart en de leek* (Meister Eckhart and the Layman; ed. Schweitzer 1997) also fits into this context, for this curious text would thus also be associated with an anti-clerical movement in which Beguines and Beghards were well represented.

[110] The inquisition document concerning the Beguines of Schweidnitz is published as Appendix II in Leff 1967, 721–740 (see pp. 730–34 for Margaretha Pictrix); cf. Schweitzer 1992, 236 and Schweitzer 2000, 326.

[111] Ed. Strauch 1902, 288–311 (here 305, 26–306, 3); cf. Schweitzer 2000, 329–330. *Von dreierlei geistlichem sterben* [Concerning the three types of spiritual death] has close

> comforting for all people concerning (their relation towards) God, for they may be compared to a tree, which by means of its wide branches and fruit and with far-reaching leaves provides shade and nourishment for all people.]

It is possible that in the text concerning the mystical palm tree, the compiler of manuscript H encountered the most concrete expression of the spiritual foundation upon which the spirituality of the intended readers of the *Limburg sermons* was based. The Middle Dutch interpolations show that this kind of piety was certainly not uncontroversial; on the contrary, they illustrate that it had to be vigorously defended. It may even be the case that we may account for the stamp of approval which Ls. 31 receives in manuscript H by this very association with a not entirely orthodox, but for all that no less attractive mystical piety.

2.4 Seven Passion Sermons *(Ls. 32–38)*

The relatively heavily adapted Palm Tree treatise brings to a close the series of translations of *St. Georgen sermons*. The *Limburg sermons* collection continues next with a series of seven texts in which the suffering and death of Christ play a central role. We will discuss these seven passion sermons collectively. Whoever has read the translated *St. Georgen sermons* will immediately realize that they are a different kind of material altogether. It is important, however, to try to objectify such intuitions. The impression of otherness invoked by the passion sermons with respect to the translated *St. Georgen sermons* is largely a question of language. Although the former do have an eastern flavour to them, the German patina discernible in the *St. Georgen sermons* in manuscript H is here less strongly in evidence, if at all. The seven passion sermons may well have been Middle Dutch originally, or perhaps they are texts that orginated less far to the east than the *St. Georgen sermons*.

The rubrics assigned to the passion sermons in manuscript H reveal that the compilers of the manuscript undoubtedly recognized the coherence of this group of texts. All of the rubrics make reference to the passion of Christ. The group of seven is divided into two parts. The first group, consisting of three texts, consistently discuss various aspects

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ties with a short text entitled *Die IX felsz* [The Nine Rocks] in ms. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cgm 834, ff. 131v–133r (dated 1349/1350; ed. Strauch 1902, 256–257).

of the passion seriatim. Their rubrics are all very similar: *Dits van VIII saken dar Got mensche ombe wart* [This concerns eight reasons why God became man] (Ls. 32), *Dit sprict van V saken dar mi ombe te cruce sal gaen* [This discusses five reasons why one should go to the Cross] (Ls. 33) and *Dits van V saken dar Jhesus Cristus ombe gemartelt wart* [This concerns five reasons why Christ was tortured] (Ls. 34). These texts all have a clear structure—Seidel calls it 'klar disponiert' [clearly disposed]—and have all been well adapted to meet the formal requirements of the sermon.[112] As the titles indicate, the structure of these passion sermons is determined by numerical series. Thus in Ls. 34, prompted by the words of Jesus (John 10:18), an explanation is offered for why He had to suffer here on earth in the cross: 1) because it was the most ignominious of deaths, 2) because it was the bitterest of deaths, 3) because only thus could the pain be equal to the guilt of mankind, 4) because in that way he could free the souls of the righteous from hell, 5) because his outstretched arms are a sign that he will receive everyone. By far and away the most attention is reserved for the second point, where it is explained by means of five arguments why the death Jesus suffered was the most painful possible: 1) he was tortured because of the guilt of others, 2) he suffered pain on behalf of his enemies, 3) he suffered for people who were not worthy of it, 4) he suffered pain in every part of his body, and 5) he was particularly sensitive to physical pain by virtue of his divine nature. Ls. 34 places extra emphasis on the fourth of these, where in excruciating detail are described exactly which pains Christ suffered in all of his limbs.

The other four passion sermons have a somewhat looser structure, though the rubrics in manuscript H do reveal a certain degree of coherence: *Dit sprict van der vreiceliker martellen ons heren* [This one speaks of the terrible torture of our Lord] (Ls. 35), *Dets van der groter minnen die ons Jhesus Cristus toende an den cruce* [This concerns the great love Christ showed on the cross] (Ls. 36), *Dets van der groeter pinen die Jhesus Cristus doegede* [This concerns the severe pain suffered by Jesus Christ] (Ls. 37) and *Dets van der groeter martelen die Jhesus leit an den cruce* [This concerns the great torture suffered by Christ on the cross] (Ls. 38). Despite the absence of a tight structure, these texts are closely related to the first three passion sermons by virtue of their contents. In Ls. 35, for example, we are told that Jesus himself chose to suffer, and why, whereas the

[112] Seidel 2003, 246.

next sermon describes how great was the love he demonstrated for us by allowing himself to be nailed to the cross. Ls. 37 also explores this theme: it attempts to form an appreciation of the pain God's son must have felt when his noble soul was separated from his chaste body. Finally, the last passion sermon explains how Jesus' life on earth must have been, for him, a long road of suffering.

In addition to the unity shown in terms of content, there is also good reason to regard the seven passion sermons as a unit from the perspective of their transmission history. The *St. Georgen sermons* manuscript F (Fulda, Hessische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Theol. Aa. 8^0 79) contains a text in which, under the title *Von unsers herre geburte* [Concerning the birth of Our Lord], practically the entire contents of all seven passion sermons have been incorporated (fig. 13).[113] The text of Ls. 35–38, the four sermons with the less well-defined structure, has been interpolated into the main structure of Ls. 34. Because of the high degree of coherence in terms of contents, it sufficed to delete or slightly modify small bits of text, such as an introduction or a conclusion, in order to arrive at a continuous narrative concerning the passion of Christ. Given the contents of the resulting text, the choice of title in F is odd, to say the least.

The manuscript from Fulda, then, constructs a new mosaic text from the seven *Limburg sermons* on the passion. F is dated to the first half of the fourteenth century and need not be that much younger than manuscript H. Based on dialectal features F has been localised in the Middle Frankish-speaking area, though unfortunately no further data concerning its provenance are available. Seidel has meticulously compared the Middle Dutch passion sermons and *Von unsers herre geburte*, and concludes that F is indeed related to H, but is certainly not a copy of it.[114] In the transmission of the *Limburg sermons* these passion sermons do turn up regularly, though never all seven in the same manuscript. From their appearance elsewhere in the corpus we may conclude that the seven passion sermons had already been added to the *Limburg sermons* collection at the H* stage. Apparently the Middle Frankish manuscript F had no connection to this early stage of development. The variants of H and F often agreed against the rest of the corpus transmission (Am, B1, Br1). Thus F belongs in the same textual family as manuscript

[113] On ms. F see Seidel 2003, 58–61.
[114] Seidel 2003, 181–182.

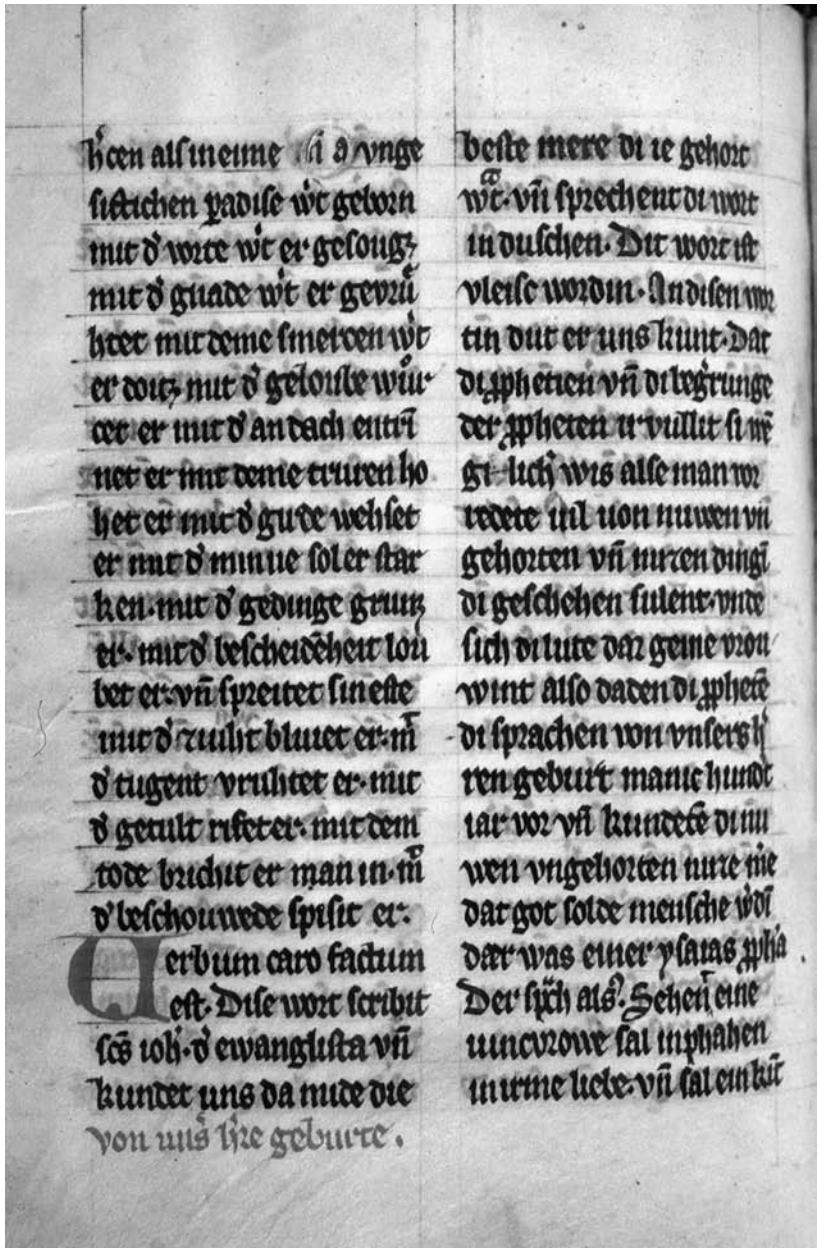

Fig. 13. MS Fulda, Hessische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Theol. Aa. 8^{0} 79, f. 89v. Opening leaf of *Von unsers herre geburte*.

H, without being dependent on it. Precisely what the relationship was between F and the *Limburg sermons* remains unclear, but some connection with the *St. Georgen sermons* tradition cannot be ruled out. Manuscript F—which is incomplete—presumably contained a complete *St. Georgen sermons* cycle, which would belong to the y1 branch in the stemma.

> The seven passion sermons appear in several different manifestations both in the corpus transmission and the more widely disseminated one.[115] F is not included here:
> Ls. 32: ms. Am, ff. 135ra–144vb (with an interpolation from Rd. 57—the mosaic character of this ms. was discussed in the previous section); ms. Tilburg, Universiteitsbibliotheek, KHS 20, ff. 167v–169r (excerpt)
> Ls. 33: ms. Am, f. 182ra–185rb; ms. B1, ff. 33r–36r; ms. Bonn, Universitätsbibliothek, S 2052, ff. 33r–36r
> Ls. 34: ms. Am, ff. 131rb–134ra (excerpt); ms. B1, ff. 18r–28v; ms. Br1, ff. 69r–81r
> Ls. 35: ms. B1, ff. 17r–18r (excerpt)
> Ls. 36: ms. Am, ff. 191ra–195vb (with an interpolation from Ls. 38)
> Ls. 37: ms. Am, ff. 127vb–128vb (excerpt); ms. B1, ff. 12r–17r
> Ls. 38: ms. B1, ff. 28v–33r; ms. Br1, ff. 62r–69r

The picture presented by the transmission on the one hand, and the relationship between F and H on the other, leads to the tentative conclusion that these seven *Limburg sermons* form an original Middle Dutch cycle of passion sermons. It is certain that all seven sermons appeared in *H and thus existed in Middle Dutch versions at the end of the thirteenth century. The ancient manuscript H is the only one to contain the complete cycle and as such constitutes the oldest witness to the seven passion sermons. H is the manuscript that best preserves the original form, as it is unlikely that the mosaic form of F was the original and that the Middle Dutch texts would have been based on it. If this theory is correct, then manuscript F represents a fairly unusual phenomenon, namely the penetration of Middle Dutch religious prose into the German speaking regions of the early fourteenth century. Traffic in the other direction was much more common at that time, as the relationship between the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* clearly illustrates (see also § 4.6).

There is, however, another possibility: H* and F may go back independently to a lost original of the passion sermons. This could well have

[115] Ls. 35 and Ls. 38 are also published in *Van minne spreken* 1976, 210–222 and 223–233, respectively; both according to H.

been either German or Dutch. The possibility that the seven sermons were originally German cannot be discounted for another reason. In a sermon preached by the Franciscan Konrad Bömlin (†1449) in Strasbourg in 1436/37, the influence of Ls. 33 is clearly apparent.[116] In this *Limburg sermon* the cross is presented as a tree and subsequently five benefits of the tree for mankind are given. These benefits, such as shade and fruit, are associated allegorically with the wood of the cross upon which Christ hangs. Bömlin incorporates the same material in a somewhat briefer context in one of the three sections of his sermon on the theme *Christus passus est pro vobis* ('Christ suffered for you'; 1 Peter 2:21). It is impossible to determine where Bömlin got this material. He might have drawn upon an existing German tradition, but he could also have found it in a translation of originally Middle Dutch material, such as that offered by manuscript F, perhaps.

Even though the intended audience is rarely addressed directly in the passion sermons, those few instances where this does occur are sufficient to give us a good idea of who they were. The following passage from Ls. 35 makes it abundantly obvious that they must have been monks:

> Ay sekerlike, darombe vuget utermaten wale geesteliken liden dasse temelike sin in haren kore ende in haren getiden ende innich in haren gebede. Mar leider, wi sin so wilt ende so idel ende loepen so ligtelike ute ende sin so onstedech in onsen herten, dat wi bewilen begennen prime vor compleete. Dats een caut gebet.[117]
>
> [Indeed, surely, it is therefore fitting for religious to behave properly in the observance of their office and their hours and internally in their prayers. But alas, we are so wild and vain and easily agitated and so restless in our hearts, that we sometimes begin prime before compline. That is a cold prayer.]

Although the author of the passion sermons, like the author(s) of the *St. Georgen sermons*, had a monastic audience in mind, he is working in a different register. The mystical dimension that is certainly evident in places in the *St. Georgen sermons* (the Palm Tree treatise, among others) is almost entirely absent here. The seven passion sermons reflect upon the meaning of the life and passion of Christ. This is knowledge that

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[116] On Konrad Bömlin see Steer 1978b. The sermon in question appears in ms. Berlin, SPK, ms.germ.qu. 206 (known as the 'Predigtsammlung der Agnes Sachs,' [Sermon collection of Agnes Sachs), ff. 254r–262. Monika Costard (Berlin) brought my attention to the similarity between Bömlin's sermon and Ls. 33.

[117] Kern 1895, 508:24–29.

in fact every Christian should have: the passion is one of the central themes of the lay sermons of the mendicant orders.[118] These seven *Limburg sermons* offer more, however, than was usual in late medieval lay catechesis. And yet it is as if the author appraises his audience somewhat less highly than did the creators of the *St. Georgen sermons*. He cites copiously from the Old and New Testaments, instead of relying on biblical allusions that would have been sufficient for a more knowledgeable audience. There are also more frequent references to the deeds or sayings of the saints, something that occurs only sporadically in the *St. Georgen sermons*. Now and again he inserts an exemplum by way of elucidation, one of the stock methods of rendering a complex message comprehensible to less sophisticated minds, though this does also occur now and again in the German sermons.[119] On the whole, the passion sermons give the impression of being theologically somewhat less ambitious than the *St. Georgen sermons*.

These seven *Limburg sermons* also differ from the translated *St. Georgen sermons* in the way in which they make use of traditional materials. The author sometimes draws on different sources and exhibits somewhat different tendencies in the way in which he adapts them. I offer here some observations, in the full awareness that their import is difficult to determine. In the translated *St. Georgen sermons*, the author of the Psalms is usually referred to as 'the Prophet' (after the MHG *wissage*), without reference to the name David of the book of Psalms in the Bible.[120] In the passion sermons, citations from the psalms are usually introduced as follows: *Oec sprict David in den sautere* (or *Saltere*) [David also says in this psalter].[121] The reference to the Song of Songs is also different: in

[118] On the preaching of the mendicant orders, see e.g. D'Avray 1985 and Taylor 2000; on the passion in Latin devotional literature, see Bestul 1996.

[119] Two exemplum-like passages (*bispellen*) appear in Ls. 32, one about the magician Simon from the Life of Peter, and one derived from Gregory's *Dialogues* concerning a spiritual maiden (Kern 1895, 474:1–12). A second story taken from the *Dialogues* tells about a nun who talked too much and is presented in somewhat more detail in Ls. 36 (Kern 1895, 515:15–27). In a didactic text like *Die heilige Regel*, exempla featuring virtuous and corrupt clergy occur in much greater numbers.

[120] For the 'normal' means of citation in the *SGP* see e.g. in Rd. 40 (Ls. 4) after ms. G, f. 16rb, 16va (2x), and 16vb. The same text twice mentions, however, *der wissage Dauid* [the prophet David] (f. 18vb), whereas in the preamble to Rd. 70 we read: *dur des wissagin munt Dauid* [through the mouth of the prophet David] (G, f. 108ra).

[121] Kern 1895, 468, 9 and 473, 14 (Ls. 32), 479, 22 and 480:18 (Ls. 33), 485:5–6, 486:4–5, 510:9–10 and 513:14 (Ls. 36) and 521:11–12 and 525:15–16 (Ls. 37); Incidentally, the psalm text refers in a couple of instances to Christ and his suffering in Ls. 34 (491:3 and 11) and Ls. 35 (506:24).

Ls. 32 this text is explicitly attributed to Solomon—*oec sprict Salomon in der minnen buke* [Solomon also say in the book of love]—whereas this is not the case in the *St. Georgen sermons*, as far as I have been able to determine.[122] Moreover, the seven passion sermons make use of authors unknown to the *St. Georgen sermons*, or cite certain authorities much more frequently. Ambrose is not cited in the German sermon collection, but does appear in Ls. 32 and Ls. 38, and again in Ls. 40 (which is attributed to Guiard of Laon).[123] A similar situation holds true for Hrabanus Maurus: he appears in Ls. 32 and again in Ls. 40.[124] One way in which the passion sermons do not differ from the Middle High German sermon corpus is in their strong interest in the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux, though here it regards Bernard's opinions on the suffering of Christ in particular[125] Practically every significant comment in these seven sermons is supported by a citation from the *doctor mellifluus*.[126] This sampling of cited authorities demonstrates that the level of the passion sermons should not be underestimated, either.[127]

In a few of the passion sermons (Ls. 34, 35, 36 and 38) there appear a considerable number of references to Anselm of Canterbury. Theo Coun has demonstrated that a number of these references (in Ls. 35, Ls. 36 and Ls. 38) come not from Anselm, but from the *Sermo de vita et passione Jesu Christi* [Sermon on the Life and Passion of Christ] by Ekbert von Schönau (†1184).[128] Ekbert von Schönau was born to a noble family from the region between Cologne and Bonn. He preached in

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[122] Kern 1895, 468:13–14; cf. e.g. in Rd. 40 after G, f. 18va: *in der minne bůche*, thus without naming the author.

[123] Ambrosius: Ls. 32 (Kern 1895.469:16), Ls. 38 (529:19) and Ls. 40 (548:10 and 25, and 549:1).

[124] Hrabanus: Ls. 32 (Kern 1895, 470:25) and Ls. 40 (554:21 and 556:10).

[125] Cf. in that context Ls. 18, which develops the martyring of Christ as its second point of focus; this is for the most part composed of citations and anecdotes from Bernard (cf. Kern 1895, 379,13–381,24).

[126] Cf. Seidel 2003, 246.

[127] Ls. 37 is the only place in the *LS* where Dionysius the Areopagite, one of the founders of the Western mystical tradition, is named. That happens here in an innocent enough way, in an unjustified attempt to equate the great teacher of negative theology with the patron saint of Paris. It is not entirely certain whether the story appears here for the first time in Middle Dutch lierature, given the fact that Maerlant also refers to it in his *Rijmbijbel* or *Scolastica*, which is a continuation of Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica* (cf. Berendrecht 1996, 110–112).

[128] Cf. Coun 1985, 530–531: the references in question are in Ls. 36 (Kern 1895, 510:20–25) and 38 (528:22–26, 531:15–24, 531:27–29). In a personal communication (24–11–2001), Coun added another reference in Ls. 35 to this list (Kern 1895, 499,1–4), for which I acknowledge my thanks.

and around Cologne against the Cathars and was abbot of the monastery Schönau, but is best known as the 'publisher' of the visions of his sister Elisabeth von Schönau.[129] Ekbert's *Sermo de vita et passione Jesu Christi* appeared in the Middle Ages as *Meditatio IX* in the *Meditatio de humanitate Christi* [Meditation on the humanity of Christ], which was attributed to Anselm of Canterbury. To make the confusion complete: Ekbert's treatise on the passion is often also attributed to Bernard Clairvaux, with whom Ekbert had strong affinities in a spiritual sense.[130] The remaining Anselm passages in the seven passion sermons would appear to have no connection to Ekbert von Schönau's *Sermo*.[131] And yet these passages are meditative in nature and the suffering of Christ is a constant in all of them. For example, they begin with *Ay edele sele, besech den suten Jhesum wie hi gespannen es* [Oh noble soul, beseech sweet Jesus how he was stretched (on the cross) etc. Perhaps these passages were drawn from a different part of the *Meditatio de humanitate Christi*, which was, after all, in its entirety the work of Anselm. The remaining Anselm citations in the *Limburg sermons* were all derived from the translated *St. Georgen sermons*, and most of them are pervaded with the same passion-oriented meditative atmosphere.[132] They might even have been drawn originally from Anselm's *Meditatio*. Or was there perhaps an early translation in the vernacular?

> Theo Coun counts no fewer than five Middle Dutch translations of Ekbert's *Sermo* in the period 1300–1550. On the other hand, there is just one Middle High German translation, which probably dates to no earlier than the fifteenth century. The oldest Middle Dutch translation is *De gaert der minnen dien maecte de ertsche bisschop Ancelmus* [The garden of love that bishop Anselm made] which Coun dates to the first half of the fourteenth century. A *explicit* in this text in ms. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 3093–95 names Vranke Callaert (*Hier gaet ute der minnen gaert, dien ic u*

[129] On Ekbert von Schönau see e.g. Köster 1980 and Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 63–80.

[130] Cf. Coun 1985, 515–516; see also Steer 1978a and Köster 1980. There is some confusion in these publications concerning the title of Ekbert von Schönau's text. Steer 1978a, 379–380 calls it *Meditatione de humanitate Christi* and maintains that the same text survives under the title *Sermo the vita et passione Christi* and is attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux. Köster 1980, however, labels Ekbert's *Stimulis amoris (dilectionis)*. I use the title given by Coun 1985 (who did not consult the aforementioned publications).

[131] The passages in question are in Ls. 34 (Kern 189:491, 19–22) Ls. 36 (515:3–10) and Ls. 38 (528:31–529:2).

[132] The relevant passages appear in Ls. 12 (Kern 1895, 308:23–26), Ls. 13 (324:7–9, 324:34–325:5 and 326:12–15), Ls. 20 (393:5–18) and Ls. 24 (411:23–25 and 414:4–9).

> *dietschte, Vranke Callaert* [Here the garden of love ends, that I translated in Dutch for you, Vranke Callaert], but from this it is difficult to determine whether Callaert was the commissioner or the translator of *Der minnen gaert*.[133] However this may be, the 'Anselm citations' in the passion sermons Ls. 35, Ls. 36 and Ls. 38 are, given the age of the *Limburg sermons*, now regarded as the oldest witnesses to the reception of Ekbert von Schönau in Middle Dutch, whether they are original or not.

In the context of sourcing the seven passion sermons, a passage in Ls. 37 is also worth mentioning. The background is contituted by the Biblical fact that the entire world was cast in darkness at the moment that Jesus died on the cross. According to Ls. 37, this phenomenon was observed even in Greece, where the pagan teacher Dionysius noticed it. He also understood its significance: the god of nature was being tortured. Later, Ls. 37 continues, this same Dionysius was converted by Paul, after which he died the death of a martyr while on one of his preaching tours in Paris. Furthermore, a Roman by the name of Centurio was present at the crucifixion who, though still a pagan, immediately understood that Jesus must be the son of God.[134] Both anecdotes appear in more or less the same form in Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica*, which presumably served as their source.[135]

> The attribution of the name 'Centurio' to the Roman soldier with the rank of centurian mentioned in the gospels of Luke and Mark (Luke 23:47 and Mark 15:39) is a widespread error throughout the Middle Ages. The extremely influential *Historia scholastica* is an important witness to this. The mistake also appears in a number of Middle Dutch gospel harmonies and probably found its way via that route into works like Jan van Boendale's *Lekenspiegel* [Mirror of Layfolk] and Jan van Ruusbroec's *Spiegel der eeuwigher salicheit* [Mirror of Eternal Blessedness].[136] In the thirteenth-century *Luikse Leven van Jezus* ['Liège Life of Jesus'] and Jacob van Maerlant's *Rijmbijbel* or *Scolastica* [Rhyming Bible]—which he based

[133] Coun 1995b identifies Callaert as the translator, but see now Kwakkel 2002a, especially 59–64, on this character.

[134] Cf. Kern 1895, 527: 4–19.

[135] *Legitur quia tunc Athenis vigebat studium, et cum inquisiissent philosophi causam tenebrarum, nec invenirent, dixit Dionysius Areopagita quod Deus naturae patiebatur. Et fecerunt ei aram, et superscripserunt: 'Ignoto Deo', the qua legitur in Actibus apostolorum* (*PL* 198, 1631–1632) and *His visis Centurio et qui eum eo custodiebant Jesum, timuerunt et dicebant: Vere filius Deus erat iste* (*PL* 198, 1633), respectively.

[136] Cf. e.g. the Haaren diatessaron (ed. the Bruin 1970b, 115:34–38), the Cambridge diatessaron (ed. de Bruin 1970c, 56:29–33) and the *Diatessaron theodiscum* (ed. Gerhardt 1970, 163, 6–11); in his apparatus, Kern 1895, 527, points in this context to Boendale and Maerlant.

primarily on Comestor—the rank of centurian is not mistaken for a personal name.[137] However interesting this might be, the difference does little to aid us in situating within the tradition the thirteenth-century, probably Middle Dutch author of the seven passion sermons.[138] Incidentally, Centurio also appears as a person in the Ripuarian *Buch der Minne*, this time in tandem with the publican Zacheüs.[139]

2.5 This Is the Book of the Orchard *(Ls. 39)*

Dbuec van den boegarde [The Book of the Orchard] marks the beginning of a new series within the sixteen interpolated *Limburg sermons* (a translation of this sermon in Appendix V). Whereas the seven passion sermons constitute a thematic entity which may probably be attributed to a single author, the cohesion of the remaining nine texts is considerably less pronounced. It is a given that more than one author had a hand in the creation of these texts, though exactly how many were involved is impossible to say. Nor is it possible to determine whether any of these texts may be attributed to the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*. For the time being it makes most sense to regard him as their editor, who, given what we know of his interventions with the translation of the *St. Georgen sermons*, may well have added a few touches of his own here and there.

While the remaining nine interpolated *Limburg sermons* do not give the impression that they form a unified group, some commonalities may be observed. One of the most characteristic features is the strong interest in *minne* mysticism, which is particularly pronounced in these nine texts. This interest is definitely manifested in *Dbuec van den boegaerde*. A passage from the opening of Ls. 39, on the love of God, immediately sets the tone:

> Minten als die muder har kint, als die brut haren brudegom. Gin souten niet minnen caudelike nog lauwelike, want est caut son eest minne niet,

[137] De Bruin 1970a, 268,15–18 and *Corpus Gysseling* II-3, 633:15–19, respectively.

[138] A study of the vocabulary might produce opportunities for a more accurate localization of the passion sermons. In Ls. 38 e.g., the Latin *sceptrum* is twice translated with *hantgebeer* (Kern 1895, 531,5 and 20), which is the only instance of the word noted by the *MNW* III, 12. Ls. 43, on the other hand, translates *septrum* with *rude* (Kern 1895, 582,19). It is therefore very likely that the two Middle Dutch texts were written by different authors.

[139] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 43:2–25.

> eest oec lau son smaket niet. Ter lauwer minnen sprect Got swarlike ende sprect aldus: 'Die ic lau vinde, die spuwic ut minen monde.' Bi dien radic u allen di mint dat gi Gode mint met bernender minnen.[140]
>
> [Love Him like a mother her child, like a bride her bridegroom. Your love for Him should not be cold or lukewarm, for if it is cold it is not love, and if it is lukewarm then it does not satisfy. Concerning lukewarm love God speaks gravely, and says: 'Those whom I find to be lukewarm, I spit out of my mouth.' Therefore I advise all of you who love to love God with a burning love.]

This exhortation to a burning love of God, to *minne*, touches upon the very core of *Limburg sermon* spirituality.

The author of Ls. 39 seeks to offer a method for achieving the desired state of burning love of God. Readers and listeners are advised to plant a *verwent boegart* [blissful orchard] in their hearts, after which there follows an elaborate allegory of such an orchard.[141] The first part of *Dbuec van den boegaerde* consists of an evocative description of a splendid enclosed garden, a *hortus conclusus*, where streams flow, trees grow, flowers bloom and birds sing. Of course all of these elements are to be understood allegorically; they represent all manner of virtues that the spiritual person should strive for. Among other things, he plants in his garden the violets of humility, the lily of chastity, the walnut tree of penitence—this one produces hard nuts—and the palm tree, which here serves as the symbol for victory over all transitory things. There are three damsels in the garden who weed and prune, as needed: Remorse and Compunction pull out the weeds, while Confession prunes the unproductive branches. The sins are also represented within the allegorical scheme of the enclosed garden.

This splendid garden is guarded by a watchman, who uses his horn Power (*geweldecheit*) to warn against the dangers—sins—that lurk in the evil, outside world:

> Huet u van dien aderen mettin vergolden stripen, want si veninen gerne die tortelduven. Huet u oec van din bocken die gecleet sin met scapswollen, want si biten gerne die iůnge wingarde ende die vigboeme ende benemen hen hare edele vrogt, dats die reinecheit der conscientien. Huet u van din scalken vossen, die so dortrect sin met menger quader lest. Huet u oec van din briscenden lewe, dats van hoverden, ende nog meer

[140] Kern 1895, 538:20–26.
[141] For more on this characteristic expression, see § 4.3.

> huet u van dien cacadulle, want hi dien gewapenden riddere anxsterde in sinen crite, dats van alte groter heimelicheit in vrinscape.[142]
>
> [Guard yourself against the adders with the golden stripes, for they would eagerly poison the turtledoves. Guard yourself as well against the bucks in sheep's clothing, for they would eagerly gnaw on the young vines and the fig trees and steal their noble fruit, which is the purity of conscience. Guard yourself against the sly foxes, who are so thoroughly possessed of false tricks. Guard yourself as well against the roaring lion, i.e. against pride, and even more against the crocodile (or hell dragon), for it struck fear into the heart of the knight with its roar, that is concerning too much secrecy in friendship.

Ls. 39 shows a strong influence from the Song of Songs, but at the same time illustrates the freedom with which the themes and images from this Biblical work have been adapted. The watchman does appear in the *Canticum canticorum*, but there is more than one, and they guard the walls of a city. And of the many dangers listed here, the Song of Songs names only one: 'Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines: for our vineyard hath flourished.' (Song of Songs 2:15). For the adders with their golden stripes who have it in for the turtledoves, the billy goats in sheep's clothing who eagerly eat the young vines, the roaring lions and the *cacadulle* [crocodile] who terrify knights with their screams, the author apparently looked elsewhere and incorporated these borrowings here into a new context.[143]

While this evocatively worded description of the garden of *minne* remains a pleasant but relatively innocent *locus*, the second part of *Dbuec van den boegaerde* addresses the purpose of the life of *minne* head-on. Whoever has planted a splendid orchard in his heart may have it inspected by the damsels Wisdom, Discretion, Delight and Love. They pluck violets, lilies and roses and plait them into a garland, which they use to crown the loving soul as a bride. They also harvest pommegranates, figs and other fruits, with which the bride may refresh herself. Then this *verwende sile* [blissful soul] asks whether there is anything she lacks. The four damsels accuse her scornfully of foolishness and naiveté. In the end it is Love (Minne) who earnestly points out to her that a *verwent bedde* [blissful bed] is lacking, upon which bride and bridegroom may

[142] Kern 1895, 543:28–542:3.

[143] The author undoubtedly makes use of the rich medieval bestiary tradition, but I have not pursued the issue of the source of his information.

rest together. The four allegorical damsels together make the bed with sheets and pillows that once again represent pious virtues.

When the bed is ready, the damsels carry the *verwende sile* to where she will sleep with her noble bridegroom. The internal intercourse (*desen gebrukene*) of the bride and bridegroom can last about half a day, for Damsel Minne has ordered the everpresent watchman to go to sleep. When he awakes, he sees *ene brune wolke* [dark sky] gathering and he wants to awaken the bride in order to protect the bed and its sheets. It is Fear who tickles the bride on the souls of her feet so that, sighing and moaning, she awakens, longing deeply for what she has so utterly enjoyed and which is now beyond her grasp.

> Deus, die verwende sele die in derre groter joien was ende dus hastelike gewect wert ende in al so groet jamer weder valt, sekerlic, dats wale tontfarmen.[144]
>
> [Lord, the blissful soul that experienced the greatest of joys and is hastily awakened and falls once again into such great woe, truly, that soul is to be pitied.]

The author of Ls. 39 is well able to imagine the miserable state of the soul, despite her being surrounded by comforting damsels. He uses her lamentable situation to exhort his audience to virtue. If this *verwende sile*, who has enjoyed the Bridegroom, has cause to lament her lack, he asks rhetorically, why do the rest of us remain silent? Because we do not know our own deficiencies, is the answer. Because we have never experienced the great delight of the *verwende sile*, we do not know what we are missing. The author urges his listeners on to do their best to achieve the union with the Bridegroom, and subsequently to feel the pain of his unattainability themselves. Ls. 39 is thus an introduction to mystical spirituality.

Thematically *Dbuec van den boegarde* belongs to the susbstantial corpus of garden allegories produced in late medieval religious literature. These have been charted by Dietrich Schmidtke for the German tradition (and partially for the Dutch) as one of the most important examples of what he terms 'dingallegorische Erbauungsliteratur'.[145] According to Schmidtke's criteria, most of the *Limburg sermons* interpolated after the seven passion sermons would fall into this literary category. Although they are certainly not all exactly garden allegories, in most of these

[144] Kern 1895, 545:35–546:2.
[145] Schmidtke 1982.

texts a preference for botanical and horticultural imagery is evident. This preference is no doubt connected to the literally florid, but also richly iconographic language of the Song of Songs, in which the meeting between bride and bridegroom is described in frank terms. In the *Canticum canticorum* there is no mention of violets or roses, but rather of flora from the Middle East, such as spikenard or palm trees. But European plant species with their symbolic meanings could easily be inserted into an allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs (see § 3.5).

Thus far no parallels have been found for *Dbuec van den boegarde*, be they Latin, German or French. Until the contrary is demonstrated, it is therefore my assumption that this is an original Dutch text. Ls. 39 appears twice more elsewhere in Middle Dutch manuscripts, albeit not within the corpus transmission of the *Limburg sermons*. There is also a Ripuarian translation, which has survived under the title *Eyn verwent bongart eyns geistlichen hertzen* [A blissful orchard of an spiritual heart] in a fifteenth-century manuscript preserved in Trier. Additionally there is a highly interesting witness containing only the first part of Ls. 39, namely the Paris manuscript Mazarine 920, in which a number of Hadewijch's Letters are also preserved.

> Schmidtke provides an overview of the transmission of Ls. 39 under the title *Kleine mndl. Baumgarten* (he includes the text on account of the Ripuarian version).[146] Ls. 39 constitutes redaction II of the text, of which three manuscripts were known to Schmidtke: in addition to H these are ms. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 11.729–30 (15th century, Rooklooster), ff. 222r–236r and ms. Trier, Stadtbibliothek, 2017 (660) (diocese Cologne, ca. 1500, Ripuarian with a Dutch slant), ff. 168r–180r, *Eyn verwent bongart eyns geistlichen hertzen*.[147] To this list may be added ms. Leeuwarden, Provinsjale of Buma Bibliotheek, 685 Hs. (ca. 1450; Dominicans Maria Magdalena, Wijk bij Duurstede; also contains Ls. 46), ff. 114v–199v, *Vanden boemgaert der saligher sielen*.[148] Schmidtke regards the uniquely preserved text in ms. Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, 920, ff. 97v–101r (composite manuscript part V, 1325–1350/1350) as redaction I of the *Kleine mndl. Baumgarten*.[149] Kurt Ruh introduced the title *Boengaert van der geesteleker herten* for this text in order to emphasize the independence of redaction I, which is also

[146] Schmidtke 1982, 37–38 (no. 12).

[147] On ms. Brussels see § 2.1; on ms. Trier see Bushey 1996, 253–259. Ls. 39 was also published in *Van minne spreken* 1976, 233–241, after H.

[148] For more on this ms. see Stooker & Verbeij 1997, no. 1321 (with bibliography).

[149] Further information on ms. Mazarine 920 follows below in§ 4.1 and 4.2.

preserved separately elsewhere.[150] I agree wholeheartedly with the suggestion. The *Boengaert*, based on the sole Paris manuscript, was edited by C.C. de Bruin.[151]

In the table of contents to manuscript H and in the rubric in the text Ls. 39 is referred to as a *buec*, not a sermon. Although the compilers of this manuscript were not unambiguous in their application of this generic label, their choice of terms is in this case understandable. Whereas nearly all of the *Limburg sermons* have a Biblical passage or phrase from the liturgy as their point of departure, *Dbuec van den boegaerde* begins in an entirely different manner:

> Got hi mute ons allen gruten mettin engle Gabriele, dar Marie mede gegrut wart duese eruůlt wart mettin heilgen geeste. Jc mane u allen, Godes liven, dat gi u herte ontslut ende ontplu<c>t u oegen van binnen ende keert u an die rene minne. Leert kinnen wat Got si ende wie hi u gemint heft, eer gi wart ende sent dat gi wart. Besiet wie vaderlike hi u behuet heft, dar git wetet ende dar gis nit en wetet. Besiet wat hi u vergeven heft ende oec wat hi u geloft heft. Hout u derna ende dankets heme ende en geft u herte niman dan heme, want hi u tsine al heft gegeven.[152]
>
> [May God greet us all via the archangel Gabriel, who greeted Mary when she was filled with the Holy Spirit. I admonish you all, oh beloved of God, that you unlock your hearts and open your eyes and devote yourselves to the purest form of *minne*. Discover who God is and how he has loved you, both before you came into this world and since. Behold in how fatherly a fashion he has protected you, both when you were aware of it and when you were not. Consider what He has forgiven you for and what He has promised you. Comport yourself accordingly and give thanks to Him and give your heart to no one other than Him, for He has already given His to you.]

This introduction is strongly reminiscent of the *salutatio* with which medieval letters were usually begun.[153] The suspicion that an actual letter lay behind the opening of Ls. 39 becomes even stronger when we consider the Paris manuscript containing the *Boengaert van der geesteleker herten* [Orchard of the spiritual heart]. This provides roughly the first

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[150] Cf. Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 232; Reynaert 1975, 239–246 also considers the Paris text to be independent.

[151] De Bruin 1940, 66–68.

[152] Kern 1895, 538:5–15.

[153] On the Middle Dutch religious letter, see Kors 1993, on the *salutatio* or greeting, pp. 57–58.

part of Ls. 39, with the description of the garden of love, albeit in a clearly divergent redaction. The underlying *salutatio* is more clearly evident in the *Boengaert*:

> God moetu groeten metten ingel die Jacob verwan, daer hi hem die benedictie gaf.
> God moetu groeten, live, metten ingel die Tobias gheleide.
> Hi moete u gheleiden in allen dogeden.
> God moete u groeten, live, metten ingel Gabriel, daer Maria mede gegroet was doetse ierste werf vervult was metten heilegen geest.[154]
>
> [May God greet you with the angel that Jacob wrestled, for he blessed him. May God greet you, dear one, with the angel who guided Tobias. May he guide you in all virtues. May God greet you, dear one, with the angel Gabriel, who greeted Mary when she was first filled with the Holy Spirit.]

Biblical angels are alluded to here three times. The author demonstrates not only that he is a capable letter writer, but that he is well versed in theology, as well.

The singular ending of the *Boengaert* also points unmistakably to an origin as letter:

> Levet aldus, mine vrouwe, dat es die loen dien ic hebben wille, daer omme dat ic ghemint hebbe. Doet uwen vrienden bidden vore mi ende niet en seget wie ic si.[155]
>
> [Live in this way, my lady, that is the reward that I desire, and for which I have loved. Have your friends pray for me and do not tell them who I am.]

These apparently very private closing lines were left out of Ls. 39; instead, at that point in the text we find a segue to the second part, in which the bed of love is prepared for the lovers. But the long closing passage in which a *live vrint ons heren* [dear friend of our Lord] is exhorted to remain steadfast on the path of love remains largely intact. There we read the following lines, which in terms of tone and contents are reminiscent of the Middle Dutch interpolations in Ls. 31:

> Ende als gi dar cont gaen in din himelschen smake sonder wederseggen, dan seggic dat gi siet een geestelic kint ende bedorft nogtan herweder te komene ende te wassene in minnen. Dan en soudi niet minnen die metten breden scuen nog mettin breden crunen, ogte ombe dasse heren

[154] De Bruin 1940, 66. De Bruin emends here *Maria* for *hi* and *vervult* for *ter werelt*.
[155] De Bruin 1940, 68.

> dragen ogte wide cogelen, nog omb gestelic gelaet nog ombe dasse u minnen. Mint har heileg leven ende laet varen dien lighame van butene ende mint Gode te herteliker dis hijt hen gegeven heft.[156]
>
> [And if you could travel into the heavenly taste unchallenged, I say to you that you are a spiritual child and nevertheless would need to come again and grow in love. Then you would not love those who wear wide shoes or tonsures, nor because they wear hair shirts or long mantels with a hood, nor would you be concerned with a religious demeanor, nor with the very fact whether they love you or not. Love their holy life and leave off your concern with the external body, and love God the more ernestly because He has given of Himself to them.]

This is a critical reference to the spiritual milieu: clergy are not to be valued for their external characteristics, but rather for their holy lifestyle.

The comparison between Ls. 39 and the *Boengaert van der geesteleker herten* allows for a single conclusion, in my view. Both texts go back to a letter in which a clerical leader who wishes to remain anonymous provides religious instruction to one or more 'dear ones' in the form of the orchard of love. It is clear that the *Boengaert* is much closer to this original letter than the *Limburg sermon*, although its many errors reveals that the Paris manuscript provides a rather corrupt version.[157] The composite manuscript in which the *Boengaert* is preserved dates to ca. 1350 or earlier. Precisely where it originated is unknown, but the dialect points to Brabant. Manucript H is admittedly a good deal older than Mazarine 920, but it nevertheless offers an authentic text. It does manage to remove a number of characteristically epistolary features that remain in the *Boengaert*. No later than the end of the thirteenth century, the author of *Dbuec van den boegaerde* must have compiled his text from an already existing letter and an allegory on the bed of love. That he may have written this text earlier himself may not be ruled out.[158]

When it comes to Middle Dutch religious letters, the first name that springs to mind is Hadewijch, an author with a large corpus of letters to her name. This association is anything but misplaced, for Letter 1 contains several passages that appear in the opening and part one, respectively, of Ls. 39 and the *Boengaert van der geesteleker herten*. It is

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[156] Kern 1895, 542:21–30.

[157] This is indicated by the many emendations in De Bruin's (1940) edition.

[158] My interpretation of the relationship between the two redactions of the *Kleine mndl. Baumgarten* differs from that of Schmidtke 1982, 194–199, who dates manuscript H to the late 14th century (p. 38).

generally assumed that both texts employed this Letter, each in its own idiosyncratic way, as its source.[159] Here we do no more than present Hadewijch's first Letter and the *Limburg sermon* side by side. The introduction to Ls. 39 is cited above; here follows the parallel passage from Letter 1, in which the corresponding phrases are given in italics:

> Hier omme bid*ic u alsoe vrient sinen lieven vrient*, ende mane u alse suster haere liever suster, ende hete u alse moeder haren lieven kinde, ende ghebiede u van uwen gheminden alse brudegom ghebiedet siere liever bruyt: *dat ghi ontpluuct die oghen uwer herten* claerlike ende besiet u in gode heilichleke. Leert te besiene wat God es: hoe hi es waerheit alre dinghen jeghenwerdichilike ende goetheit alre rijcheit vloyeleke ende gheheelheit alre doghet gheheeleke omme de welke men singhet III 'Sanctus' inden hemel omme dattie III namen in haren enighen wesene alle doechde versamenen van welken ambachte si sijn ute desen III wesenen. *Siet hoe vaderlike u God ghehuet hevet ende wat hi u ghegheven hevet ende wat hi u gheloeft hevet. Besiet hoe hoghe minne es deen vor dander ende danckes hem met minnen.*[160]
>
> [This is why I entreat you as a friend his dear friend; and I exhort you, as a sister her dear sister, and I charge you, as a mother her dear child, and I command you in the name of your Lover, as the bridegroom commands his dear bride: that you open the eyes of your heart to see clearly and contemplate yourself in God as holiness demands. Learn to contemplate what God is: how he is Truth, present to all things; and Goodness, overflowing with all wealth; and Totality, replete with all virtues. It is for these three names that the 'Sanctus' is sung three times in heaven, for they comprehend in their one essence all the virtues, whatever may be their particular works from their three distinct attributes. See how God has protected you with fatherliness, and what he has given you, and what he has promised you. Behold how submlime is the love of the Three Persons for one another, and show your gratitude to God through love.][161]

There has been some debate on the issue of whether Hadewijch might have been the author of the *Boengaert*. J. Reynaert formulated a number of serious objections to the idea, but ultimately leaves room for the possibility that Hadewijch was indeed the author.[162] Schmidtke assumes that Ls. 39 and *Boengaert* are two redactions of the same text, whereby

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[159] The first to comment on this was Van Mierlo 1932, 378; cf. Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 14. See also Van der Zeyde 1934, 131, Lüders 1958, 59, Reynaert 1975, 239–246 (comparison of Letter 1 and the *Boengaert*), Schmidtke 1982, 194–199 (who apparently was unaware of Reynaert 1975), where the three texts in question are printed synoptically, and finally, Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 232.

[160] Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 16:18–19:36.

[161] Transl. Hart 1980, 47.

[162] Reynaert 1975, 239–246.

the author of the original made use of Hadewijch's letter.[163] Ruh posits that the mystical content of the *Boengaert van der geesteleker herten* is so slight that the text can never have been penned by Hadewijch. According to Ruh, the author of the *Boengaert* was familiar with Hadewijch's Letters and borrowed a number of ideas from them.[164] Ruh's opinion provided a certain amount of support for the views of the Hadewijch expert Van Mierlo, who could not believe that this mysterious letter—only Ls. 39 was known to him, and not the *Boengaert* from Mazarine 920—could have been authored by the mystic from Brabant. Van Mierlo thought that Ls. 39 bore strong resemblances to Hadewijch's Letter 1, as well as to her first Vision, but nevertheless it never attained to the level of her language and thought.[165]

For example, Van Mierlo found the episode in the second part of Ls. 39, where Fear tickles the loving soul on the souls of her feet, tasteless. Be that as it may, the passage in Ls. 39 where the two lovers meet each other in bed is extremely interesting from a literary historical point of view. Thematically speaking it is linked to a phenomenon pervasive throughout nearly all of world literature and known as dawn song poetry. It involves love poetry wherein is described, in wide variety of variations, how two lovers are disturbed by the dawn after a long night together.[166]

As a literary genre, dawn poetry in Dutch is a fairly late-bloomer, compared to the neighboring German and French traditions.[167] According to Peter King, Jacob van Maerlant's *Historie van Troyen* [History of Troy; 1264] is the first example of a Dutch poem in which the dawn song motif appears. Maerlant describes how Jason abandons Medea as dawn begins to break, a situation that does not appear in Maerlant's immediate source—the *Roman de Troie*, which is in turn based on Ovid—and thus must be Maerlant's own addition.[168] It might be going a bit too far to characterize Maerlant's rhymed couplets as poetry; he employed the rhyme scheme most common at the time to compose

[163] Schmidtke 1982, 194–199.
[164] Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 232.
[165] Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 14.
[166] I gratefully acknowledge Frits van Oostrom (Utrecht) who brought this connection to my attention. Cf. Van Oostrom 2006, 385–388.
[167] An overview of 'dawn poetry' in world literature is provided by Hatto 1965; Forster 1965 (pp. 473–504) treats the Dutch tradition in that volume. A monograph on the Dutch tradition is King 1971.
[168] King 1971, 25–26.

epic narratives and in this regard does not seem to have had poetic ambitions. Dawn song poetry in Dutch came into its own in a serious way only circa 1500. The best known examples are the Middle Dutch 'wachter- of dageraadsliederen' [watchman or dawn songs] from the *Antwerps liedboek* [Antwerp songbook] of 1544 in which, just as in Ls. 39, the watchman plays a central role.[169] Sometimes he sides with the lovers and delays the sounding of his horn, and at other times he is the one who cruelly disturbs their loving at daybreak.

Against this background, then, *Dbuec van den boegarde*, especially its second part, is a remarkable phenomenon in Dutch literature. The allegorical description of the bed of love may well have led an independent existence before it was compiled in Ls. 39, and may thus be contemporaneous with Maerlant's *Historie van Troyen*. This *Limburg sermon* is at any rate the oldest Middle Dutch prose text in which the motif of the watchman appears. Even more intriguing is the way this originally secular motif of a tryst between two lovers has been adapted to a context that describes the spiritual encounter between Christ and the loving soul. To what extent it is unique in the European context for a prose work like *Dbuec van den boegaerde* to include the motifs of the dawn song and the watchman I cannot say. The usual surveys of dawn song poetry give the impression that the theme was normally dealt with in poetic form. It is generally assumed that the Dutch watchman songs were inspired by High German examples.[170] We will see, however, that a French connection is also among the possibilities (see § 4.4).

2.6 This Is the Book of the Twelve Fruits *(Ls. 40)*

Limburg sermons 40 takes a paraphrase from a text in John's Revelation as its theme. The Latin passage—*Et ex utraque parte fluminis lignum vitae adferens fructus duodecim* ('In the midst of the street thereof, and on both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits…); Rev. 22:2)—is not provided at the beginning of the text, which is unusual for the *Limburg sermons*. In traditional fashion, a number of core concepts

[169] Ed. Van der Poel et al. 2004 (see also Joldersma 1982). For the watchman songs in the the *Antwerps liedboek*—Forster 1965, 476 counts 23, out of a total of 221—see Kalff 1883, 281–298, Forster 1965, 476–480 and King 1971, especially 9–50.

[170] This opinion appears already in Kalff 1883, 297; it is developed and historicized much more thoroughly in King 1971.

in the scriptural text are allegorized: the river, its two banks, the tree of life and the twelve fruits. The tree of life represents, of course, Christ, the two banks allude to the dual nature of man and God, while the stream itself stands for the Trinity. The heart of the sermon is formed by the twelve fruits of the eucharist and, finally, the foliage of the tree is comprised of the word of God: these bring health to the soul. At the sermon's conclusion, John Chrysostom is invoked and it is explained how one may prepare oneself to be worthy of the sacrament. One must be possessed of three qualities: 1) penitence for one's own sins, 2) mercy for one's fellow man and 3) eager desire (*begerlike begerde*) for this sacrament.

As the rubric indicates, the core of *Dbuec van den twelf frogten* [The Book of the Twelve Fruits] is comprised of the twelve fruits of the tree of life, which are to linked to the miracles of the eucharist. This sacrament has the following twelve beneficial affects: 1) it renders the soul healthy, 2) it frees the soul from (a large portion of) its guilt, 3) it warns the soul against temptation, 4) it purifies the soul of unclean thoughts and *onhofscher begerden* (uncourtly, i.e. ignoble desires), 5) it restores (*erstoert*) those things that have been lost, 6) it strengthens the human heart, 7) it transforms mankind for the better, 8) it raises the dead, 9) it leads the soul along the path of God's will, 10) it brings the soul into a fraternal bond with the Holy Spirit, 11) it is granted to the pure of heart, and 12) it leads to the desire for and delight in God.

Ls. 40 is the only one of all the *Limburg sermons* (and the *St. Georgen sermons*) of which the author can be identified with certainty. This Middle Dutch text is namely a faithful translation of a Latin sermon by the secular priest Guiard of Laon (ca. 1170–1248), whose biography was written by P.C. Boeren.[171] Guiard was born in the region around Laon in Picardy. He may perhaps have spent some of his younger years in a Cistercian abbey in the area. It is at any rate certain that he was sympathetic to the Grey orders throughout his entire life. But in the end Guiard opted for the life of a cleric. In the years 1210–1212 he earned the title of *magister* of theology, probably in Paris. Subsequently he served as chaplain to the bishop of Laon, Robert of Châtillon, and from 1215 to 1221 held the post of archdeacon of Troyes. Then he set course for Paris, where he became a canon of Nôtre Dame and also served as chancellor of the university. Guiard ended his career in the

[171] Boeren 1956; the following brief biography is based on this work.

southern Netherlands: from 1238 to 1247 he was bishop of Cambrai (Kamerijk), which at the time encompassed the greater portion of the Duchy of Brabant. Following his abdication he spent the last year of his life in the Benedictine abbey of Affligem.

In addition to this splendid career in the Church hierarchy, Guiard of Laon also enjoyed an outstanding reputation as author. He wrote a substantial number of treatises on a variety of theological subjects.[172] Moreover, he enjoyed great fame as a preacher. J.B. Schneyer attributes more than four hundred sermons to Guiard in his repertory of Latin sermons before 1300.[173] Most of these have been preserved in a Latin-French macaronic language, hence the assumption that Guiard preached especially to layfolk and nuns.[174] Guiard of Laon was the first medieval theologian to concern himself seriously with the subject of the fruits of the eucharist.[175] He has a number of sermons and treatises on the subject to his name, in which he discerns series of three, four or eight fruits. There is also an entirely separate series of twelve.[176] None of these texts, however, enjoyed the same level of success as the Latin twelve-fruit sermon that comprised the source for Ls. 40. In addition to this Middle Dutch translation, Old French and Middle High German translations were already circulating in the thirteenth century. In the centuries to follow, Guiard's sermon on the eucharist formed the basis for a great variety of redactions and adaptations, especially in the Germanic areas.[177] Oddly enough, only one Latin manuscript of this popular twelve-fruits sermon survives; a subject to which we will return in a moment. No less remarkable is the fact that this sermon does not appear in Schneyer's repertory of sermons; it was apparently transmitted outside the normal channels.

Our insight into the complex relationships among the various versions of the twelve fruits sermon has advanced bit by bit. P.C. Boeren encountered this sermon in his research into the life and works of

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[172] On Guiard's oeuvre, see Boeren 1956, 90–143.

[173] Schneyer 1969–1990, vol. 2, 253–282 (406 nrs.); cf. Boeren 1956, 260–299 (348 nrs.).

[174] Cf. Zink 1976, 92–93, Boeren 1954, 18–19 and Oliver 1994, 254; cf. also § 1.2.

[175] On Guiard and the fruits of the eucharist, see Boeren 1953a, Boeren 1953b and Boeren 1956, 242–259.

[176] Boeren 1954, 20–22.

[177] Ruh 1981 provides a brief overview, in which the OF tradition receives rather short shrift. For more on the latter, see Boeren 1956, 263 no. 22, Zink 1976, 78–79 and 484 no. 27, Oliver 1994, 253–256; on the OF tradition, see further § 4.5.

Guiard of Laon. In a separate contribution he revealed that *Limburg sermon* 40 was a translation of a sermon by the canon from northern France.[178] Boeren thought to have identified the original version in a manuscript dated to 1286, that belonged to the Benedictine nuns of Origny-Sainte-Benoîte (bishopric of Laon). There the work bears the title *Des XII preus que li sacremens fait* [On the twelve fruits produced by the sacrament] and is frankly attributed to Guiard: *Diex ait lame leuesque Guiart de Cambrai et doit* [sic] *vrai pardon qui fist cest sermon* [May God receive the soul of Guiard of Cambrai and may he truly pardon him who composed this sermon] There are, however, a number of important differences between this Old French text and both of the other thirteenth century vernacular versions, namely that Ls. 40 and the Middle High German *Diz ist von zwelfleie fruhte und nuzze* [This concerns the twelve fruits and benefits] (I will discuss the German text in greater detail later). The Old French sermon has as it theme *Arbor bona fructus bonos facit* ('Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit'; Mat. 7:17), whereas the passage from Revelations dealing with the tree of life serves here as the protheme. Moreover, compared to the *Des XII preus*, the third and fifth fruits are transposed in the Ls. 40 and *Diz ist von zwelfleie fruhte und nuzze*, a phenomenon that would become characteristic for the Dutch and German transmission of Guiard of Laon's twelve fruits sermon. Further, a number of citations of John Chrysostom and Hrabanus Maurus appear here that are absent from Old French (but which do show up in Guiard's other Latin sermons on the fruits of the Eucharist). Boeren explained these differences by positing a lost Latin exemplar of *Dbuec vanden twelf frogten* and *Diz ist von zwelfleie fruhte und nuzze*, one that had been produced in either the western German or eastern Netherlandic region.[179]

Shortly thereafter A. Ampe indeed discovered a Brussels manuscript containing a Latin sermon with the rubric *Sermo domini Wiardi de duodecim fructibus sacramenti* [Sermon of master Guiard concerning the twelve fruits of the sacrament] and the theme *Ex utraque parte fluminis lignum vite afferens fructus duodecim*.[180] It was not difficult for Ampe to demonstrate

[178] Boeren 1953a; for additions and corrections to this article, see Boeren 1954. Boeren also attempts to downplay the relationship between the *LS* and MHG literature, and to link the Middle Dutch sermon collection with the Franciscans (see § 1.1).

[179] Boeren 1953a, 275–278.

[180] Ampe 1957, with an edition on pp. 308–324, in which the differences with Ls. 40 are noted.

that Ls. 40 was directly dependent upon this Latin manuscript: the twelve fruits appear here in exactly the same order as in *Dbuec vanden twelf frogten*, and moreover the citations from Chrysostom and Hrabanus are also present. Thanks to an allusion to the veneration of the arm of St Lawrence, Ampe was even able to establish where the sermon had been delivered, for the Premonstratensian monastery of St Martin at Laon possessed just such a relic.

> The only manuscript in which the Latin sermon *Ex utraque parte* is preserved is Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 8609–8620, ff. 60r–66v, originating at the Cistercian monastery of Ter Kameren near Brussels. This codex consists of two parts, a hagiographical part from the thirteenth century, containing among others the life of Aleid of Schaarbeek, and a Eucharistic part, dating to the fourteenth century.[181] Thus far no other manuscripts containing the *Sermo domini Wiardi de duodecim fructibus sacramenti* have been found.[182]

Ampe has demonstrated clearly that the Middle High German *Diz ist von zwelfleie fruhte und nuzze* and the Middle Dutch Ls. 40 are based independently upon the Latin sermon. The only surviving Latin manuscript from Ter Kameren cannot possibly have served as the exemplar for the vernacular transmission because it dates to the fourteenth century. The sermon *Ex utraque parte* must therefore already have been disseminated in the late thirteenth century, not only in the southern Netherlands, but in the High German-speaking region, as well. The later Middle Dutch and Middle High German transmission of Guiard's twelve fruits sermon, too, may be traced virtually in its entirety to this Latin sermon.

Dbuec van den twelf frogten follows the sermon *Ex utraque parte* closely, whereby the original structure of the sermon is well preserved. Some very specific references were, however, removed. This is illustrated, for example, by the anecdote concerning the arm of St Lawrence, which was relevant only to the Premonstratensians of Laon. In the Latin these monks are addressed directly:

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[181] For more on this manuscript, see § 1.5 n. 307; on the second, eucharistic portion, see especially Ampe 1957 and Ampe 1964.

[182] Ms. Paris, BM, 987 contains on ff. 36r–41v a sermon bearing the rubric *Incipiunt XII fructus qui proueniunt the corpore christi*, which is quite possibly related. The first fruit is identical to the text discovered by Ampe, but its development of the theme is totally different. The ms. dates to the second half of the fourteenth century (the year 1397 appears on the fly leaf, but it was not writen by the same hand as the text; I owe this observation to Erik Kwakkel), contains a range of eucharistic texts and originated among the canons regular of Rooklooster (see further Bougerol 1993).

> Nec mirum. Si enim vos claustrales capsulam brachii beati Laurentii incomitatam a vobis facile non permitteretis deferri, multomagis angeli corporis Christi, id est iustum, qui has reliquias suscepit, incomitatam non relinquent.[183]
>
> [And it is no wonder. For if you monks would not easily allow the reliquary of St. Laurence's arm to be taken, which had been left unattended by you, then how much more will the angels not relinquish the reliquary of Christ's body which has been left behind (as is fitting, since he took on these very remains).]

The Middle Dutch translator exerted himself to give this passage a more general import:

> Dans engeen wonder, want ic sie, hebben cloesterlide in haren cloester eenen arm ogte ene hant van enen heilgen, sin latense nit verre dragen van hen. Met meren regte en suln hen die engele nit laten onttragen die casse ons heren Jhesu Cristi.[184]
>
> [It is no wonder, as I see it, that if monks have in their monasteries the arm or the hand of a saint, they do not let it far out of their sight. It is even more understandable that the angels did not allow the shrine of Jesus Christ to be stolen.]

It would seem that the translator did not dare to treat his exemplar independently, possibly because his knowledge of Latin was not exceptionally good. Many of the departures from his Latin source can only be explained, in Ampe's view, by ignorance.[185] Sometimes, however, the Middle Dutch is more complete than the Latin: a citation of St Agatha, for example, which must have been truncated in the Brussels manuscript containing *Ex utraque parte*, appears in its entirety in the *Limburg sermon*.[186]

A passage concerning spiritual drunkenness, which Boeren considered unique to Ls. 40—*Deus, wat jammer est dat wi so decke gaen ten winkelre ons heren ende den win sins worts ende sins sacraments drenken ende nit dronken en*

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[183] Ampe 1957, 312:9–12.

[184] Kern 1895, 549:13–17.

[185] Numerous other examples are to be found in Ampe 1957, in the apparatus to the edition, and also in in Ampe 1958, 56–60. Cf. also Ruh 1981, 297, who notes that Ls. 40 best preserves the original form of *Ex utraque parte*.

[186] For the relevant passage, see Kern 1895, 551:10–13, cf. Boeren 1953, 275 and 279, and Ampe 1957, 314. Lüders 1958, 57 (who was unfamiliar with Ampe's work) observes that the same citation from St Agnes also occurs in Rd. 40 (Rieder 1908, 126:6–8) and the corresponding Ls. 4 (Kern 1895, 220:19–22); the differences, however, are such that Ls. 40 can have borrowed little if anything from Ls. 4.

werden [God, what a pity it is that we visit the Lord's wine cellar so often and drink the wine of his Word and his Sacrament, but never become drunk]—appears in the Latin original and is thus simply a translation.[187] This is not an internal reference within the *Limburg sermons* corpus to Ls. 43, as Boeren quite understandably supposed.[188] Only the translation of the Latin *Mirum* with the expletive *Deus* can possibly be linked with the more frequently observed, sometimes somewhat emotional line of reasoning of the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*. Another possible idiosyncrasy of *Dbuec van den twelf frogten* is the characterisation of the twelfth fruit. The Latin reads *duodecimus fructus est et preparatio ad gloriam et eius adeptio* [the twelfth fruit is the preparation for glory and its attainment], whereas the Middle Dutch translation here speaks of *begernisse ende gebrukennisse* [desire and enjoyment].[189] Is this perhaps another instance of the interest in mystical joy that manifests itself on a regular basis throughout the *Limburg sermons*?[190]

Guiard of Laon's sermon on *Ex utraque parte* must already have penetrated deep into the German speaking areas by the thirteenth century, as indicated by the existence of *Diz ist von zwelfleie fruhte und nuzze*.[191] This Middle High German text transformed the original sermon into a treatise, and could therefore leave out the sermon's theme and exordium. The anonymous translator demonstrates a good command of his Latin original, which he adapted deliberately and efficiently. The first nine fruits show significant abridgement, whereas the final three are more expansively elaborated compared to Guiard. *Diz ist von zwelfleie fruhte und nuzze* was presumably written for an audience of nuns, or, at the very least, for a monastic audience.[192] It remains a mystery how the otherwise completely unknown Latin *Ex utraque parte* sermon could have migrated from northern France or the southern Low Countries to Germany at such an early date.

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[187] Kern 1895, 550: 13–15; cf. Ampe 1957, 313: 17–18.

[188] Cf. Boeren 1953a, 279.

[189] Respectively Ampe 1957, 321:5 and Kern 1895, 556:9; cf. Ampe 1957.

[190] Boeren 1953a, 267–268 does indeed link the addition of *gebrukenesse* with the general import of Ls. 40, which is aimed at 'holy' or 'blessed' souls. Faesen 2000, 138 n. 6 makes the interesting observation that the Middle Dutch translation places a greater emphasis on desire—the central subject of his study—than does Guiard, but draws no further conclusions from this.

[191] Ed. Pfeiffer 1840, 354–359.

[192] On *Diz ist von zwelfleie fruhte und nuzze* see among others Boeren 1953, 257–258 and 269–273, Ampe 1957, the editorial apparatus, Ampe 1958, 58–60, Lüders 1958, 56 n. 1 and Ruh 1981.

> Ms. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. germ. 142, ff. 178–185r and 94v–96v is the only known manuscript containing *Diz ist von zwelfleie fruhte und nuzze* (Ruh labels this 'Oberdt. Zwölf-Früchte-Traktat I').[193] This codex was written by several hands, which may be dated to the late thirteenth or the early fourteenth centuries. Cgm 142 presumably originated in a convent that, given its dialect, must have been situated in eastern Frankia or southern Thüringen (or southern Middle Germany.[194]

The oldest witness to Guiard's series of twelve fruits remains the Old French *Des XII preus que li sacremens fait*. Meanwhile, three late-thirteenth century manuscripts containing this text have come to light, all three of which are dated to ca. 1280 (see § 4.5). Michel Zink includes *Des XII preus* in his repertory of Romance sermons under the incipit *Arbor bona bonos fructus facit*. This brief text continued to enjoy some popularity in the French-speaking areas well into the fifteenth centruy.[195] Zink thought that the Latin sermon on *Ex utraque parte* might also have constituted the source for the Old French *Des XII preus*.[196] But this does not explain the differences between the two texts—i.e the transposition of fruits three and five, and the appearance or absence of the citations from Chrysostom and Hrabanus.

Given the fact that both *Ex utraque parte* (based on the rubric *Sermo domini Wiardi*) and *Des XII preus* (based among other things on the inscription in the manuscript from Origny cited earlier) are attributed to Guiard, it seems prudent to assume that there were at least two very similar twelve fruits sermons by the bishop of Cambrai in circulation. Guiard of Laon was a celebrated preacher who preached regularly on the fruits of the sacrament. It is very plausible that he preached on the twelve fruits at different times and in different places, whereby he allowed himself minor deviations. A sermon with the theme *Ex utraque parte*, apparently first delivered in Laon, was disseminated in Latin in the Netherlands and Germany, where it became the basis for a number of vernacular adaptations. Furthermore, in female circles in northern France, a sermon circulated with the theme *Arbor bona* and protheme

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[193] Ruh 1981, 297.

[194] Petzet 1920, 266–270, provides a description of the manuscript; see Scheider 1987a, vol. 1, 275–276 and vol. 2, fig. 172 for paleographic observations.

[195] Zink 1976, no. 27 (p. 484) lists the following manuscripts: Chantilly, Musée Condé 134 (1094), ff. 75r–75v (14 century); Paris, BN, fr. 939, ff. 101v–105r (15th century); Paris, BN, fr. 1879, ff. 153v–161v (15th century); Paris, BN, fr. 1802, ff. 107r1–112r1; Paris, BN, fr. 1882, ff. 50r–56r (15th century). Missing from the list is London, British Library, MS. Harley 2930; see § 4.5 for more on this ms.

[196] Zink 1976, 78–79.

Ex utraque parte, which was—uniquely among the sermons in Guiard of Laon's oeuvre—preserved exclusively in the vernacular. Whether a Latin exemplar existed for this Old French sermon is unknown, though it is likely.

Guiard of Laon's version of the motif of the twelve fruits of the Eucharist was widely disseminated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, especially in the German and Dutch-speaking areas. This is not the place to analyze the twelve fruits tradition in detail.[197] I would merely draw attention to the Middle Dutch which, like *Dbuec vanden twelf frogten*, very closely resembles Guiard's sermon *Ex utraque parte*.[198] Ls. 40 is by far the oldest Middle Dutch version of the Latin text and is moreover a faithful translation. The second oldest Middle Dutch version is an adaptation that in its oldest manuscript bears the rubric *Twelve vruchten mach men merken vanden sacramente in dien outare* [There are twelve fruits of the sacrament in that altar] This brief treatise is based directly on *Ex utraque parte*, but offers little more than an enumeration of the twelve fruits of the Eucharist.[199] The transmission of this text, which extends into the second half of the fourteenth century, appears to be concentrated in Brabant.

> Besides H, the following manuscripts are known to contain Ls. 40: ms. B1, ff. 39r–43v; Bonn, Universitätsbibliothek, S 2052, ff. 37r–41v (probably canonesses regular Nazareth in Geldern); Weert, Minderbroeders 10, ff. 166v–170v (ca. 1470, Beghards of St Bartholomew, Maastricht).[200] Three manuscripts are known to contain the short redaction of *Twelve vruchten mach men merken vanden sacramente in dien outare*: Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 3067–73 (Ruusbroec manuscript Vv; composite manuscript part VI dated to 1361; ca. 1400 in Rooklooster), ff. 131r–133v; Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 1330, ff. 92v–94v (this part dated to ca. 1430,

[197] See as well Boeren 1953a, Ampe 1958 and Ruh 1981.

[198] Boeren 1953a, 259–267 distinguished between 'Limburg' and 'Brabantine' textual families of the twelve fruits sermon, whereby Ls. 40 was of course grouped in the first category. Once Ampe 1957 had made known Guiard of Laon's Latin sermon *Ex utraque parte*, Ampe 1958 drew out the consequences of this discovery for our understanding of the Middle Dutch tradition (including editions of the most important redactions and adaptations). This has for the most part superceded Boeren's work; I have based my own work here mainly on Ampe's findings.

[199] Ed. Ampe 1958, 75–77; cf. pp. 60–61.

[200] For more on ms. Bonn see § 4.1; for ms. Weert see Boeren 1953a, 260 and Stooker & Verbeij 1997, vol. 2, no. 886 (p. 296). Boeren 1953a, 260–261 lists another manuscript in a private collection in the 'Limburg family': Oegstgeest, Dr. Schotman, ms. 1, f. 304r. I have not been able to trace this ms., which according to the concise description provided by Boeren also contains Ls. 40.

perhaps from canonesses regular St. Luciëndal, Sint-Truiden); Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 21.890 (written in 1557), ff. 261v–262r.[201]

As Ls. 40 demonstrates, the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* included at least one translated Latin sermon in his collection. The question of whether the Middle Dutch translation was already circulating before the *Limburg sermons* collection was compiled must remain unanswered for the time being. Ls. 40 was certainly already present in the collection at stage H*, for the text also appears in corpus manuscript B1.[202] The only textual witness to the Latin *Ex utraque parte* sermon is a fourteenth century manuscript from a Cistercian monastery in Brabant. The series *Twelve vruchten mach men merken vanden sacramente in dien outare*, likewise from the fourteenth century, presumably also originated in Brabant. And according to the fifteenth-century library catalogue of Sint-Maartensdal in Leuven, the Brabantine monasteries of Rooklooster and Groenendaal each possessed a manuscript containing a Latin sermon by *Guido episcopus Camarecensis*, bearing the title *De XII fructibus venerabilis sacramenti Apoc. 22 Et.* [On the twelve fruits of the venerable sacrament].[203] All of this suggests that the bishop of Cambrai's twelve fruits sermon continue to enjoy popularity in his own diocese.

In his own day, Guiard of Laon was not an unimportant man within the female religious movement in Liège and Brabant, as the hagiographical record attests. Thomas of Cantimpré recounts in the *Vita Lutgardis* that the bishop of Cambrai, who did not speak Dutch, conversed at length with Lutgard—despite the fact that her ignorance of French was legendary.[204] In the *vita* of Margaret of Ypres, also written by Thomas, Guiard expresses concern for Margaret's health and dispatches her

[201] Cf. Boeren 1953a, 262–263 and Ampe 1958, 60–61. Ms. Vv is discussed in detail in § 4.1; on ms. Ghent, see Lieftinck 1936, 84 and Stooker & Verbeij 1997, vol. 2, no. 1149 (p. 38); on ms. 21.890 see Biemans 1984, no. 175 (pp. 194–195).

[202] Boeren 1953a, 261–262 and 266 claims that B1 offers a better text than H, whereby he makes much of the term *vueren*, which appears in H in the translation of Rev. 22: 2 (Kern 1895, 546:25) and is correctly recorded in B1 *overen* [banks]. One wonders whether H is really corrupt here: there are many more instances in this ms. where, at least to the modern eye, *u*, *v* and *w* appear in odd places. It is quite possible that we are dealing with the term *wer* in this instance after all, despite the curious spelling. Nothing in the context suggests further that the scribe of H intended to write the Middle Dutch equivalent of '*vuur*' [fire].

[203] Cf. Boeren 1953a, 246 and Boeren 1954, 24.

[204] *AASS* Jun. III (16 June), 252; cf. Hendrix 1996–…, vol. 3, 44. Willem van Affligem's *Leven van Lutgart* is based on a version of the *Vita Lutgardis* in which this anecdote does not appear (cf. Mantingh 2000, 108 n. 22).

spiritual mentor to see her.[205] By far Guiard's most significant contribution to the women's movement manifests itself, however, in the *Vita beatae Julianae virginis*. As a theologian who had spent a great deal of time contemplating the meaning of the Eucharist, and as bishop of Cambrai, Guiard of Laon was a champion of the initiatives of Juliana of Cornillon and other religious from Liège in their attempts to have the Feast of Corpus Christi added to the liturgical calendar. As one of the first representatives of the church hierarchy, Guiard thus recognized the eucharistic spirituality that had manisfested itself in the women's movement in his diocese so emphatically.[206]

The inclusion of Guiard of Laon's sermon in the *Limburg sermons* compilation must be more than mere coincidence, despite the fact that he is not named in the Middle Dutch text. The bishop of Cambrai was very much involved in the Liège/Brabant devotional movement, to which the Middle Dutch sermons in part gave expression. Incidentally, the celebration of the Eucharist is not a main theme in the other *Limburg sermons*, though the miracle of the Mass is mentioned now and again, for example in Ls. 11 (Rd. 52): *Dis sal een igelic kersten mensche geloven dat dar es verborgen onder enen schime eens brodekens die heil<eg>e gotheit, die heilege sile ende die heilege menscheit* [Every Christian shall believe this, that hidden in the guise of bread there is the holy Godhead, the holy Spirit, and the holy Humanity].[207] This does not mean that the Eucharist was of no importance to the circles that comprised the audience of the *Limburg sermons*; the rubric for Ls. 40 in the table of contents of manuscript H makes this clear enough: *Det sin de twelf vrogte, ende es een orberlic sermoen als de brudere onsen Here suln ontfaen ende es lanc* [These are the twelve fruits, and it is a pious sermon (for) when the brothers receive the Lord, and it is long].[208] Guiard of Laon's sermon was apparently included in the *Limburg sermons* as an elucidation of this important sacrament. The conclusion of Ls. 40 in H demonstrates that the male readers of this

[205] Meersseman 1948, 113:15–21 (cap. 14); cf. King 1999, 28.

[206] *AASS* Apr. I (5 April), 459, 467 and 470; cf. Newman 1999, 85, 112 and 122. On the background to the establishment of the Feast of Corpus Christi in Liège, see e.g. Rubin 1991, 164–176 (where incidentally Guiard of Laon is not so much as mentioned), Caspers 1992, 35–56 and the collection of articles Haquin 1999 (with a bibliography covering 1946–1997). On the enormous popularity enjoyed by the celebration of the eucharist throughout the Late Middle Ages, see e.g. Rubin 1991; Caspers 1992 focusses mainly on the Low Countries (and on pp. 192–196 deals with Guiard of Laon's twelve fruits in Ls. 40).

[207] Kern 1895, 295:23–26.

[208] Kern 1895, 180:25–27.

manuscript were used to receiving daily communion: *Dat wir dagelics werdelike muten tu gaen ende ontfaen gestelike dit gerichte* [That we must go each day to receive this spiritual sustenance].[209] Such frequent celebration of communion fits only in a monastic context. Ls. 40 brings the *Limburg sermons* compilation perhaps somewhat closer to the range of influence of the leaders of the religious women's movement in Liège and Brabant. Incidentally, H is the only thirteenth century manuscript containing Guiard's motif of the twelve fruits that cannot be linked to a female audience.

2.7 This Teaches Us Nine Kinds of Love *(Ls. 41)*

This *Limburg sermon* is undoubtedly the most frequently discussed text of the entire corpus, though not by virtue of its particular literary merits. Already in the first edition of the works of—then still 'sister'—Hadewijch, J. Vercoullie noted that her tenth Letter was virtually identical to the second half of *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne* [*This teaches us nine manners of love*].[210] Thanks to this identification Ls. 41 is almost exclusively studied from the perspective of authorship: did Hadewijch borrow from the *Limburg sermons* or was it the other way round? Before we tackle this subject, there follows first an overview of the structure and contents of this extremely interesting text.

Although Ls. 41 is labelled a 'sermon' in the table of contents of manuscript H, it does not meet modern standards for that genre. The text begins as follows:

> Die hoger ende vrier minnen plegen wilt, hi sal Gode ende elken mensche ombe Gode ende omb naturlike doget ende omb gemene regt puerlike ende oetmudelike minnen ende getruwe wesen, sonder ansien van wederminnen ogte van wedertrouwen, van verdinden ogte van onverdinden,

[209] Kern 1895, 557:14–15. Boeren 1953a, 258, 260 and elsewhere maintains that the Middle Dutch text deals only with the spiritual and not the sacramental communion. Boeren was apparently led astray by the term *gestelike* [spiritual] that appears in this passage, which in fact is more likely to refer to the spiritual attitude with which a person takes communion (in some cases in the *LS* it can even be translated with 'mystic'). Ampe 1958, 57 and 70–74 stresses that both Guiard of Laon himself and the translator of Ls. 40 have in mind the actual, sacramental communion. For a discussion of the sacramental, spiritual and multiple communion, see for example Caspers 1992, 213–224.

[210] Vercoullie 1905, XVIII.

> also als die sonne har edel schinen ende ligt rivelike ut geft beide guden ende quaden, beide danx ende ondanx.[211]
>
> [He who would practice the higher and freer form of love shall humbly love and be faithful to God and every person for the sake of God and for the sake of natural virtue and love for the sake of pure, common righteousness and, without expectation of reciprocal love or faithfulness, of reward or reciprocation, just as the sun graciously shines its noble rays upon the good and the bad alike, on both the virtuous and the unvirtuous.]

Just about every distinctive characteristic of the sermon—a theme and/or protheme, the use of the direct speech, references to an actual preaching context—are absent here. In the introduction the author describes clearly what he intends to do, namely to show how one may learn to love freely and exaltedly. The form he chooses for this has more in common with a treatise than it does with a sermon.

As J.M. (Willeumier-)Schalij has convincingly shown, the author of Ls. 41 was very familiar with Bernard of Clairvaux's *De diligendo Deo*.[212] His famous treatment of divine love is without doubt the most important source of inspiration for the first part of *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne*, but our author treats Bernard independently. He systematizes the latter's somewhat loose train of thought, lending it more logical cohesiveness. In the Middle Dutch text, the three possible forms of love are distinguished: 1) the natural attraction that man as creature feels toward himself and his fellow man, 2) carnal love (Bernard: *cupiditas*), which is dismissed because it concentrates too much on the created being and too little on the creator, and finally 3) the pure love of and for God (Bernard: *caritas*), which becomes the subject of *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne*.

The title of Ls. 41 refers in particular to the first part of the text in which nine ways of expressing of *caritas* are developed. First the author distinguishes the three possible objects toward which human love may direct itself: 1) toward itself, 2) toward one's neighbor, and 3) toward God. Each one of these objects may be loved in three ways, and thus we arrive at nine forms of love announced in the title. It is especially with respect to love for one's neighbor that these three forms are clearly distinguished: 1) for its own sake (*amicitia*), 2) for one's self,

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[211] Kern 1895, 557, 20–26.

[212] Schalij 1943b. Van Mierlo 1953, 237–239 cast doubt on the connection between these two texts.

(*amicitia* and *caritas*), and 3) exclusively for God (*caritas*). The highest of the nine forms is, of course, the love of God, which flows forth from pure selflessness. *Dusgedane minne heit teverges gemint, want si dint ende en heischt engenen loen* [Such love is called unconditional love, for it serves and requires no reward].[213] This is the exalted and free love that the author announced would be his subject.

But the author of *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne* apparently knows from his own experience that one can never exercise this love for long.

> In derre minnen rost die salege sile, Gots getruwe minnerse, in groter walheit ende in groter genugden. Mar ombe dat die ure cort es dassire in bliven mach als lange alst verladen es metter burdenen dis sterfelics lighamen ende gekerkert mut wesen in dit jamerlike dal dis druven ellents ende si scheden mut van dien darse so gerne ware ende weder comen mut darse so over noede es, so comptse decke van groter welden in grote welicheit.[214]
>
> [The sacred soul, God's faithful beloved, reposes in such love, in great bliss and in great joy. But because the period of time in which she may reside in that state is brief, as long as she is weighed down with the burden of a mortal body, and must be imprisoned in this baleful vale of tears, and she must be separated from the place where she so longs to be and be where she does not wish to be, so it is that frequently with great sensual pleasure that she comes to great misery.]

After tasting the sweetness of contemplation, the blessed soul is thrust back into the hell on earth created by God in order to purify these loving souls. This hell has seven torments: 1) heat, 2), cold, 3) darkness, 4) stench, 5) worms, 6) 'unwill' (*onwil*, i.e. that precisely the opposite of what one wants to happen comes to pass—and 7) desire for death. Such lists of the torments of hell are fairly common in medieval religious literature. We find, for example, a clear parallel in *Die heilige Regel für ein vollkommenes Leben*, where twelve pains of hell are enumerated.[215] What is striking about Ls. 41 is that the author links the seven torments with the earthly hell of the mystics, who are tortured by love. The torments in *Die heilige Regel* are really mobilised catechetically in order to engender fear in the reader for the 'real' hell, so that they will refrain from committing the deadly sins.

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[213] Kern 1895, 565:5–6.
[214] Kern 1895, 565:12–19.
[215] Cf. Priebsch 1909, 26–30; the series is regularly interrupted here, as elsewhere in the text, by apprpriate exempla.

It is difficult to determine where the author of Ls. 41 derived his seven torments. Lists of varying numbers of hell pains were common property in thirteenth-century literature. For example, Ls. 43 mentions *die negen pinen der hellen* (the nine torments of hell), without specifying what they are.[216] In the fourteenth century a Middle Dutch text on the subject was in circulation, entitled *Vander helscher pinen* (Concerning the torments of hell).[217] Below is an overview of the torments of hell according to Ls. 41, *Die heilige Regel* and *Vander helscher pinen*, respectively.

1	heat	fire [= heat]	heat
2	cold	cold	cold
3	darkness	worms	stench
4	stench	stench	hunger and thirst
5	worms	hammer-blows	worms
6	'unwill'	darkness	fear
7	deathwish	shame for one's sins	hate and envy
8		impure spirit	darkness
9		fiery chains	sadness and shame
10		hunger	denial of grace
11		thirst	
12		rest without mercy	

The relationship between these three lists is unmistakable, but given the widespread familiarity with the torments of hell it is virtually impossible to identifiy the actual source for Ls. 41. Hadewijch's Poems in Couplets 16, on the seven names of Love, is also of interest in this context. The seventh name is *helle*, and a number of features of hell—heat, cold, darkness—appear here in the same order as in Ls. 41.[218]

According to *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne*, the hell inhabited by those moved by pure *caritas* is to be regarded as heaven. Whoever gives himself utterly over to God seeks out, as it were, the torments of love. In the real hell, on the other hand, things happen that go directly against the will of man. The loving soul opts for the pains of the world and they are therefore readily bearable. The author subsequently explains why

[216] Kern 1895, 589:3.

[217] *Van der helscher pinen* has not yet been published. The online BNM (http://bnm.leidenuniv.nl) lists four mss. containing this text: Antwerp, Museum Plantin-Moretus, M 380 (2nd half of the fourteenth century; Rooklooster), ff. 69v–76v; Brussels, KB, II 112 (ca. 1460; Beghards of Maastricht; also contains an excerpt from Ls. 31), ff. 110r–113v; Brussels, KB, II 1039 (ca. 1400; Beguinage, Brussels), 27r–40v; The Hague, KB, 73 G 33, ff. 86r–88v (15th century; Oude hof, Weesp).

[218] Van Mierlo 1952, 83:149–84,1. On this passus, see Reynaert 1981, 170–171 and Faesen 2000, 140–141, both of whom assume that on this point as well Ls. 41 has borrowed from Hadewijch. But if only on account of the congruence with *Die heilige Regel*, this strikes me as a somewhat premature conclusion.

the soul must love God above all things. To give just one reason: he who wishes to love that which is beautiful and good cannot overlook God, for He is beauty and goodness personified.[219]

The conclusion of Ls. 41 is devoted to the question of how one should love God. The question receives a relatively straightforward answer: *Di Gode mint, hi sal minnen sine werke, dat sin dogede* [He who loves God must love His works, that is, virtues].[220] True love for God consists in leading a life of virtue. One of the most important lessons here is that one must come to the insight that the source of the virtues lies in divine grace. Many, however, enjoy especially the sweetness that accompanies the observance of the virtues, but this is mere sensuality. A soul that has enjoyed primarily sweet self-satisfaction is left parched and emaciated when the tide turns and the source of sweetness dries up. The true observance of virtue takes place over the course of an extended process of continual internalization. Such virtues remain productive, even when there is no sweetness to be had.

This last part of Ls. 41, concerning the internalization of virtues, is a paraphrase of a chapter from the *Explicatio in Cantica canticorum*, a commentary on the Song of Songs that has long been attributed to Richard of St Victor, an attribution recently shown to be erroneous.[221] J.M. (Willeumier-)Schalij was the first to recognize this parallel, too.[222] With this important discovery she brought the debate on the authorship of Ls. 41 taking place at the time to a new level. Given the fact that I have treated this discussion in detail elsewhere, a brief summary will suffice here.[223] In his first edition of Hadewijch's visions, published in 1924–1925, Van Mierlo compared Letter 10, Ls. 41 and a very similar text in a manuscript from the monastery of St Agnes in Arnhem (see below), and concluded that Hadewijch's constituted the oldest version of the text.[224] In 1931 A.C. Bouman contested this view: he thought that older linguistic elements occurred in the *Limburg sermon* than in Hadewijch's Letter.[225] He received a stiff rejoinder from Van Mierlo, who maintained that even from a linguistic viewpoint Hadewijch's

[219] Cf. Kern 1895, 567:5–34.
[220] Kern 1895, 568:1–2.
[221] On the authenticity and influence of the *Explicatio*, see Ruh 1992, 49–50.
[222] Schalij 1943a.
[223] Scheepsma 2000, 656–660.
[224] Van Mierlo 1924–1925, vol. 2, 26–32.
[225] Bouman 1930.

was the older text. He also argued that the influence of Hadewijch's prose was to be found not just in Ls. 41, but elsewhere in the *Limburg sermons*, as well. Van Mierlo pointed to the beginning of Ls. 41, where he thought to detect similarities with Letter 6.[226] A number of years later, M.H. van der Zeyde expressed doubts in her dissertation about the authenticity of a number of Hadewijch's Letters, including Letter 10. She posited—rightly, it would prove—that the text was a sermon or a treatise by a theologian, rather than a letter by a mystic, and therefore wanted to remove Letter 10 from Hadewijch's corpus.[227] Van der Zeyde, too, was greeted with stiff opposition from Van Mierlo: he accused her of suffering from hypercriticism and of placing too much emphasis on stylistic arguments.[228] Next appeared Schalij's sensational publication, which showed that the controversial text was a Middle Dutch paraphrase of a chapter from the *Explicatio in Cantica canticorum*. Based on variants in the Letter, on the one hand, and the sermon, on the other, Schalij decided that both Hadewijch and the author of Ls. 41 drew independently upon an already existing translation of the *Explicatio*. This argument found no more favour in the eyes of Van Mierlo, who now championed the position that Hadewijch must then be the translator of Richard of St Victor's text. In support of his thesis that Hadewijch's text was in any event the oldest one, he argued that there existed unmistakable stylistic differences between the first and second parts of Ls. 41.[229] This claim was to some extent confirmed by J. Reynaert in the 1970s, as a result of a thorough study of the syntax.[230] Finally, Rob Faesen discusses Ls. 41 in his study of desire in Hadewijch. Faesen follows the accepted argument concerning the authorship of Letter 10, without so much as a reference to the debate surrounding it, though he does observe that a number of changes have been made in Ls. 41 that cause the trinitary experience of desire to fade into the background in the *Limburg sermon*.[231]

We leave off this discussion of the entanglement between *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne* and the Letters of Hadewijch (see further § 4.3) to concentrate on the question of the inner unity of Ls. 41. More or

[226] Van Mierlo 1932, 377–378 and Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 52.
[227] Van der Zeyde 1934, 121–125.
[228] Van Mierlo 1934a.
[229] Van Mierlo 1944.
[230] Reynaert 1974.
[231] Faesen 2000, 140–141.

less intuitively, Van Mierlo detected certain differences between the first and second parts of this *Limburg sermon* and Reynaert confirmed his intuition by noting significant differences in the syntax of both parts.[232] Such divergent syntactical patterns can hardly be ascribed to one and the same author. On the other hand, Schalij contended cogently that *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne* is a very well structured dissertation on the nature of divine love.[233] In the opening of Ls. 41 the author provides a succinct summary of his theme, after which, in a deliberate and skillful manner, he develops his dissertation on love. The apparent discrepancy between the stylistic variations, on the one hand, and the quality of composition, on the other, may be reconciled by assuming that the author has composed his text using materials from a variety of sources. He employed at least three different sources: Bernard of Clairvaux's *De diligendo Deo*, perhaps in a vernacular adaptation, a presumably vernacular catalogue of seven (or more) torments of hell and a Middle Dutch paraphrase of the *Explicatio*.

In a well-known passage, Bonaventure discusses four levels of involvement in the writing of books: in ascending order he distinguishes the work of the scribe, the compiler, the commentator and the author. In this scheme we would rank the author of Ls. 41—who has composed here a theological commentary, albeit one in the vernacular—in the second level.[234] The compiler of Ls. 41 must be among the first to compose a Middle Dutch treatise based on predominantly Latin sources. Not much can be said concerning the identity of the author of *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne*. He had access to the well-known authors of monastic theology, but that was true of so many ecclesiastics in the thirteenth century. What distinguishes him more from others is that he was willing to share his knowledge of divine love with an audience that had no Latin. But this characteristic brings us no closer to his identity.

The oft-discussed forty-first *Limburg sermon* has a strikingly limited transmission. It appears only in the manuscript W2 from Rooklooster, which exhibits a clear preference for the most mystical *Limburg sermons*.

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[232] We are especially concerned here with the use of verbal augmentation and the placement of the direct object with respect to the finite verb in the clause (for more, see Reynaert 1974).

[233] Schalij 1943b; see especially the figure on p. 258.

[234] For more on Bonaventure's classification and its backgrounds, see Minnis 1984, 94–95.

The contents of Ls. 41 were presumably considered too advanced for the nuns who then comprised the main audience of the *Limburg sermons*. There is one other witness, aparts from Hadewijch's tenth Letter, to the Middle Dutch paraphrase of the *Explicatio in Cantica canticorum*. In a manuscript of the canonesses regular of St Agnes in Arnhem, this text appears in a redaction that strongly resembles that of Ls. 41. Although the text from Arnhem also contains a lengthy interpolation that does not appear in the *Limburg sermon*, their readings regularly agree with one another against that of Hadewijch's Letter 10. This suggests that there was an older, thirteenth-century Middle Dutch paraphrase of the *Explicatio*, which on the one hand formed the basis for Ls. 41 and on the other was independently circulated in the St. Agnes manuscript.[235] That the scribe was no longer aware of the history of the text appears from the Latin inscription in which he attributes it to Jan van Ruusbroec. But either he or someone else noticed the error and crossed out Ruusbroec's name in black ink.[236]

> In additon to H, Ls. 41 appears only in W2, ff. 231r-252r. The late fifteenth-century ms. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2412–13, from the convent of canonesses regular St Agnes in Arnhem, contains only the second part of the text at ff. 45r–46v.[237] Hadewijch's Letter 10 is preserved in the well-known corpus manuscripts A, B en C and in ms. Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, 920. There are further two Middle High German manuscripts attributed to (St) Adelwip, which contain fragments of Letter 10 (see pp. 320–321).[238]

[235] Cf. Scheepsma 2000, 665.

[236] The complete rubric is as follows: *Hic incipit quoddam delectabile excerptum vel sumptum ex libris domini Johannis the Ruusbroec the ordine regularium prioris in Groenendael*; the portion *domini…Groenendael* was struck through by the scribe himself (cf. De Vreese 1900–1902, 72).

[237] A description of this manuscript is provided by De Vreese 1900–1902, 70–79 (H). On pp. 73–78, De Vreese prints a synoptic edition of the text based on his Ruusbroec manuscript H and Ls. 41, using the *Limburg sermons* manuscript H; cf. also Van Mierlo 1924–1925, vol. 2, 25–26, where this text is given the designation 'fragment E'; on pp. 26–32 E and F (= the last section of Ls. 41) are compared with Hadewijch's text.

[238] The Hadewijch manuscripts are described in detail in § 4.2.

2.8 This Teaches Us Seven Ways of Love *(Ls. 42)*

The twenty-fourth *Limburg sermons* is much better known under the titel *Seven manieren van minnen* [Seven manners of loving]. This brief treatise has long been attributed to the Cistercian nun Beatrijs van Nazareth/ Beatrice of Nazareth (†1268). The text has been edited numerous times and modern translations are regularly published.[239] As a classic of medieval (female) mysticism, this treatment of the relationship between God and man has also garnered a great deal of international attention.[240] Its fame makes *Det sin seven maniren van minnen*, as the title reads in H, unique among the *Limburg sermons*. An advantage here is that we need not discuss its contents in detail here; a brief summary will suffice.

Seven maniren sin van minnen, die comen uten hoegsten ende keren weder ten oversten [There are seven manners of loving, which come down from the heights and go back again far above] thus reads the familiar opening line of Ls. 42.[241] The author distinguishes seven ways of divine loving, all of which emanate from God and flow back to Him. This is clearly not a series of steps that culminate in a highpoint, but rather seven different ways in which the experience of love can manifest itself. Briefly summarised, then, the loving soul may experience the love of God in the following seven ways:

1) the desire to live entirely according to love;
2) to wish to serve without receiving anything in return;
3) the pain caused by the realisation that one can never do enough in the service of love;
4) being overwhelmed by love, which overflows the heart;

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[239] The standard edition is Reypens & Van Mierlo 1926, though Vekeman & Tersteeg 1971 is no less important. Huls 2002, vol. 1, 72–119 provides an edition that is based on H, as the oldest witness. For an overview of translations of *Van seven manieren van minnen* see Lewis 1989, 328–333 (*passim*), Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 138 and Huls 2002, vol. 2, 1030–1032.

[240] Compare the space devoted to Beatrijs in surveys of Western mysticism: Dinzelbacher 1994, 220–223, Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 138–157 and McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, 166–174. A bibliographical overview of Beatrijs research is found in Lewis 1989, 325–350. The most important publications (aside from the ones mentioned above) are without doubt the three volumes by De Ganck 1991 and the two volumes by Huls 2002 (containing an exhaustive and up-to-date survey of the literature).

[241] Kern 1895, 570:28–29. For a translation of this text in English, see that by Eric Colledge, in Petroff 1986, pp. 200–206.

5) a stormy and tempestuous desire for love, which unsettles one's entire being;
6) after long practice the soul achieves a stage at which it is able to penetrate the essence of love and receives knowledge of a higher level;
7) the soul transcends the human and the rational and experiences an eternal love.

Ls. 42 constitutes a deep, tried and true introduction to the life of service to *minne* that in the thirteenth century was so eagerly sought by so many—no doubt including the first readers of the *Limburg sermons*. Even after frequent reading, the characterization of the emotions that overwhelm the loving soul remain salient. An inherently and extremely abstract subject is here expertly rendered concrete and comprehensible, and without making use of the usual metaphors and allegories that feature so prominently in the other *Limburg sermons*. The compilers of manuscript H characterize Ls. 42 in the table of contents as a *harde geestelic* (very profound) *sermoen*.[242] Whereas they designate the Palm Tree treatise as the 'best in the book', *Det sin seven maniren van minnen* is in my view the most splendid of all the *Limburg sermons*. There are few texts in which the phenomenon of the mystic love experience are so lucidly and sympathetically described.

L. Reypens was the first to call attention to the anonymous treatise on the seven ways of loving, which he termed 'a hidden pearl of mysticism.'[243] He had no reservations about placing the unknown author on a par with Hadewijch and Ruusbroec. Reypens knew *Det sin seven manieren van minnen* from Kern's edition, but his curiosity was truly piqued when he encountered the same text under the title *Van seven manieren van heileger minnen* in the Ruusbroec manuscript Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 3067–73 (Vv).[244] The consensus at the time was that manuscript Vv was a good deal older than manuscript H containing the *Limburg sermons*. Given that Vv has an irrefutable Brabant provenance, it is Reypens' view that the treatise on the seven ways of loving could be an original Brabantine text. And that was a particularly welcome discovery in an era in which Reypens and other members of the Ruusbroec Society

[242] Kern 1895, 180:32.
[243] Reypens 1923.
[244] De Vreese 1900–1902, 645 n. 3 calls attention to this connection.

were, in its early days, assiduously looking for Dutch authors and texts from the Middle ages. But because Kern believed that all of the *Limburg sermons* had a Middle High German background, Reypens felt compelled to entertain the possibility that Ls. 42 might have been a translation from a German text, as well.

A number of years later it was Reypens himself who attributed the 'hidden pearl' to Beatrijs van Tienen, prioress of the Cistercian abbey Nazareth near Lier, in Brabant.[245] It had been known for some time that Beatrijs had authored texts in Middle Dutch. In the prologue to the Latin *Vita Beatricis*, her anonymous hagiographer states namely that he is basing his work on vernacular texts written by Beatrijs herself.[246] But at the time there was no trace of any such Middle Dutch works by her hand. When Reypens perused Beatrijs' life in Chrysostomus Henriquez' *Quinque prudentes virgines* [The five prudent virgins], he encountered toward the end a chapter entitled *De caritate dei et VII eius gradibus* [On the love of God and their 7 steps], which in terms of contents coincides for the most part with the *Seven manieren van minnen*. This fact, coupled with the hagiographer's claim that Beatrijs herself provided the material for her biography, led him to conclude that *Seven manieren van minnen* must be regarded as an authentic Middle Dutch work by Beatrijs van Nazareth. Only one year after his discovery he published a thorough edition of the text, provided with an exhaustive introduction by Van Mierlo.[247]

> The oldest witness to Ls. 42, or the *Seven manieren van minnen*, is manuscript H, a fact that until recently has hardly been taken into account in the scholarship.[248] Within the transmission of the *Limburg sermons* the text appears only once elsewhere, in W2, ff. 252r–271v.[249] Beyond that, the full text appears in ms. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 3067–73 (Vv), where it comprises ff. 25r–40v of the second volume in the composite manuscript, which is dated to ca. 1350.[250] Further, a few excerpts are to be found in manuscript Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, II 2252, ff. 133v–134r.[251] The three complete manuscript versions do not differ

[245] See Reypens & Van Mierlo 1925, followed a year later by the thorough edition and analysis Reypens & Van Mierlo 1926.
[246] For more on this, see § 1.5.
[247] Reypens & Van Mierlo 1926.
[248] Huls 2002 (cf. n. 239) was the first to take the reading in H as the basis for his interpretation.
[249] This had already been established by Reypens & Van Mierlo 1926, 113*–114*.
[250] On this manuscript, see § 4.1.
[251] Cf. Lievens 1965.

> appreciably from one another, though variants do appear with some regularity in which H and W2 agree with each other against the Brussels ms. Vv. In light of the stemma of the *Limburg sermons* transmission, this agreement should come as no surprise to us. Apparently, manuscript Vv has a different background. In the editions of the *Seven manieren van minnen* it was always assumed that Vv was the exemplar because it was considered the oldest manuscript and because the text was regarded as the best one.[252] What we need now is a critical edition that takes into account the facts that manuscript H is the oldest witness and that the *Seven manieren van minnen* has been transmitted twice within the context of the *Limburg sermons*.[253]

Reypens' attribution of Ls. 42 was immediately widely accepted, but is upon closer scrutiny somewhat hastily arrived at.[254] In his prologue the author of the *Vita Beatricis* states humbly that he is doing little more than translating Beatrijs' Middle Dutch notes, but that claim should be taken with a grain of salt. Further analysis reveals that there are signs in the *Vita Beatricis* that it has been abridged, expanded and adapted on a variety of levels. The author reports, for example, that he has left out Beatrijs' exhaustive commentary on the Trinity because it would be of little interest to the audience of the *Vita Beatricis*, the nuns of Nazareth.[255] We should thus regard the life of Beatrijs first and foremost as an independent work by the hagiographer, rather than a direct translation of her own writings. In that light we must guard against unquestioningly accepting the claim that the chapter on the seven ways of loving belongs to the legacy of Beatrijs, all the more because this chapter falls somewhat outside the basic structure of the *Vita Beatricis*. It is also possible that the hagiographer got the Middle Dutch text from elsewere and included it in her *vita* because its contents dovetailed so

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[252] An older exception is *Van minne spreken* 1976, where the text of Ls. 42 printed on pp. 242–254 is based on H (without any explicit acknowledgement thereof); Huls 2002, vol. 1, 72–119 provides an edition following H with parallel Dutch translation, followed by a color facsimile of H, ff. 190v–197r (pp. 120–133). Heymans & Tersteeg 1970 presents diplomatic transcriptions of all three manuscripts, and Huls 2002 also provides the complete text of these three, passage for passage. For the internal correspondences amongst the three manuscripts, see Reypens & Van Mierlo 1926, 111*–125* (stemma on p. 125*), Vekeman & Tersteeg 1971, 28–30, Faesen 1999a, 43 and Huls 2002, 67–70.

[253] Huls 2002, vol. 1, 70, however (following Vekeman & Tersteeg 1971, 23), maintains that a critical edition is hardly feasible because it proves nearly impossible to justify choosing some variants over others.

[254] For a more thorough defense of this position see Scheepsma 2004a. Beatrijs' authorship of *Seven manieren van minnen* was also called into question by Peters 1988, 33.

[255] Ed. Reypens 1964, especially ch. 4 (cited in part at § 1.5), 269, 275 and 276. Cf. also Faesen 1999b, especially 104–108.

nicely with Beatrijs' mystic way of life. In other words: Ls. 42 cannot as a matter of course be attributed to Beatrijs van Nazareth. Or, rather, the authorship of this *Limburg sermon* is certainly not as certain as that of Guiard of Laon for Ls. 40.

In his work on the *Seven manieren van minnen*, Reypens pays quite a bit of attention to the question of whether Beatrijs structured her sensitive treatise in the same form as it has been transmitted, or whether she or others intervened later on to alter the structure. When the subject of the fourth manner is first announced, we read that both the joys and woes of love will be discussed in what is to follow, while in actual fact only the pleasant aspects of the fourth manner of loving are treated. It is only with the fifth manner, *orvut* (or *orewoet* [madness]), that the more difficult aspects of loving are treated. Moreover, Reypens felt that it was illogical to include after the sixth manner, which entails peaceful bliss, a seventh manner of loving in which once again the soul is thrown into a state of confusion and desire. He attempted to solve this problem by among other things applying biographical details from the *Vita Beatricis* to the *Seven manieren van minnen*.[256] A number of other critics (Axters, Heeroma, Vekeman) have since concerned themselves with this 'interpolation problem.' Paul Wackers is the most recent of these, and he concluded that the *Seven manieren van minnen* constitutes in its current state a 'nauw samenhangend, zeer doordacht en bijzonder knap geconstrueerd stuk proza' [unified, well-considered and extremely clever piece of prose].[257]

There is no doubt that in its current form Ls. 42 is possessed of a meaningful and well designed structure and message; otherwise the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*, conscious of structure as he was, would presumably never have included it in his corpus. But this does not discount the fact that, as in so many of the other *Limburg sermons*, this one appears to have been 'tampered with.' I find it difficult to assess Reypens' view of the fourth and fifth ways, but it does indeed appear as if the author of Ls. 42 has done some splicing in order to arrive at the desired seven ways of loving.[258] That the seventh way was added

[256] Reypens 1931, with an up-dated version in Reypens 1964, 227–256.

[257] Wackers 1971 (citation p. 229); see this work as well for a summary of this discussion. Huls 2002, vol. 1, 303 reports only the observations of Reypens, but does not further problematize the 'interpolation problem' in his exhaustive study of the seven manners of love.

[258] Wackers 1971, 223–224 notes that in the opening section of the fourth way in ms. W2, only that aspect that is actually treated is mentioned, namely 'sweetness'.

later, or at least has a different origin, cannot be doubted. In manuscript H—and we would do well to remember that this is the oldest witness to this text—the sixth way ends in the fashion so very typical of the *Limburg sermons*—with a prayer: *Dits in den vlesche een engelic leven ende hir na volget dewelike, dat Got ons allen geve. Amen* [This is the angelic life in the flesh and afterwards there follows the eternal [life], and may God grant each of us to follow it. Amen].[259] In manuscript Vv this 'Amen' is absent, to be sure, but there, too, *Seven manieren van minnen* ends naturally with the sixth way in the same sentence. And yet a seventh way follows which makes a markedly different impression.[260] Reypens remarked with scorn upon the sermonizing tone used there, which he attributed to the scribe, given the fact that Beatrijs could never have written something like it.[261] K. Heeroma pointed out that the seventh way is by far the longest, and even detected a more lyrical tone in it.[262] Both observations may be objectified to some extent. In the seventh way, the narrative is twice strengthened by a Biblical citation and once by an argument taken from St. Augustine, which are presented both in Latin and in translation.[263] Nowhere in the text of the other six do we encounter either direct Biblical citations or Latin translations of them. This would indeed point to an origin of the seven ways in a preaching context, as this is a method we encounter frequently elsewhere in the *Limburg sermons*. Moreover, there are a few bits of rhyming prose in the seventh way, many more than appear in the others, and more than appear elsewhere in the *Limburg sermons*, as well (see § 3.6). In light of this, then, one may indeed agree with Heeroma that the seventh way makes a more poetic impression than the other six.

It would seem, in short, that the same procedures were in affect in compiling Ls. 42 that we have observed in a number of other *Limburg sermons*. The comparison with Ls. 41, with its related title *Dit leert ons van negenrehande minne*, strongly suggests itself. This text is certainly a

[259] Kern 1895, 578, 24–25.

[260] This is not a unique phenomenon within the *LS* collection. In Ls. 29, comprised of two *SGP*, the text of Rd. 66 concludes with a prayer by the translator himself, ending in 'Amen' (Kern 1895, 435: 14–15), following which the text continues with the translation of Rd. 75 (see § 2.2).

[261] Reypens 1964, 255.

[262] Heeroma 1969, 218–221.

[263] Cf. Vekeman & Tersteeg 1971, 478–481, 510–512 and 568–572 (based on Vv); in H only the two biblical citations in Latin are reproduced (Kern 1895, 580:9–11 and 31–32).

compilation of diverse textual segments of equally diverse origin, which have been masterfully combined to form a new whole. The signs are somewhat less clear in Ls. 42, but it, too, must be considered a compilation. The cardinal question in this particular case is of course whether it was Beatrijs of Nazareth who either wrote or compiled this mystical prose text. She would in that case have had to be able to write about the ways of loving in two distinct registers. This seems in particular somewhat unlikely in the case of the seventh way, with its sermonizing tone and textual citations, for a woman lacking theological schooling. Moreover, Beatrijs or someone else would then have had to compile the various textual bits into a series of seven ways. The *Vita Beatricis* confirms that Beatrijs herself wrote texts for her personal meditation, whereby she presumably used a variety of (Latin?) sources.[264] But meditative sketches for personal use is quite a different endeavor to constructing mystagogical texts on the ways in which divine love can manifest itself. Female authors during the middle ages seldom wrote about this somewhat distant, mystagogical stance; they tended to write directly from their own religious experience. All indications of such ecstatic conditions are entirely absent in the *Seven manieren van minnen*.[265] There are therefore well-founded reasons to doubt Beatrijs's authorship of Ls. 42. This treatise on love could well have been written by a clerical author with pastoral duties in the *cura monialium*.

Finally, the transmission context of Ls. 42 deserves some comment. Apart from H, the text occurs just once in the context of the *Limburg sermons*, namely in manuscript W2. The text in the Brabantine manuscript Vv diverges in a number of ways from the *Limburg sermons* tradition (see above). It is unclear where the copyist of manuscript Vv got hold of the text of the *Seven manieren van minnen*, but it seems clear that he did not use an exemplar from the *Limburg sermons* context (or did he perhaps himself prepare a lightly modified version?). *Seven manieren van minnen* is contained in volume II of the composite manuscript Vv, together with among other things the pseudo-Eckhart tract *Dit sijn tekine eens vernuftechs gronts* [These are the signs of a rational ground] and a pronouncement by Meister Eckhart himself.[266] In terms of its contents, this portion of the manuscript exhibits an apparent connec-

[264] Reypens 1964, 69:39–70,46, cited in § 3.5.
[265] Cf. McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, 170.
[266] On the contents of this section see Reypens & Van Mierlo 1926, 114*–123*.

tion to the German-speaking regions (in some parts of manuscript Vv German influence may be detected, though not in part II; see § 4.1 and 4.6). Reypens and Van Mierlo hit upon a couple of seemingly German terms that occur in the *Seven manieren van minnen*, strikingly enough in particular in manuscript Vv. Initially these were explained by positing the possible German origin of the text, but when authorship was attributed to Betrijs van Nazareth, this explanation was naturally abandoned.[267] Perhaps we should reconsider the possibility of an origin further east for this splendid treatise on the seven ways of love, especially now that the attribution of Ls. 42 to Beatrijs van Nazareth is less certain than heretofore assumed. Is it no more than coincidence that manuscript H of the *Limburg sermons*, which exhibits clear connections to Middle High German literature, is the oldest textual witness to the *Seven manieren van minne*, and that the manuscript regarded by experts as the best one from Brabant, ms Vv, also exhibits signs of German, perhaps Rhineland, influence?

2.9 This Is the Book of the Spiritual Wine Cellar *(Ls. 43)*

Whereas several of the interpolated *Limburg sermons* do not take a passage from scripture as their point of departure, *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* [The Book of the Spiritual Wine Cellar] opens with a very clear theme. But contrary to the compiler's usual practice, the Latin text is not given in this instance. Ls. 43 begins with: *Ay sute joncfrouwen van Jherusalem, der coninc leitde mi in sinen winkelre ende ordinerde in mi die caritate,*

[267] See Reypens 1923, 718, n. 5, Reypens & Van Mierlo 1925, 353 and Reypens & Van Mierlo 1926, 61*. Reypens & Van Mierlo 1926, 120* list a number of these forms: among others, Vv has *ervullen, op ersteet*, *terlangen* and their variants, whereas the only eastern form in H is *ervullen*, as opposed to the more Dutch-sounding *opversteet* and *verlangen*. The 15th-century W2 from Brabant does not have any of these eastern forms. Oddly enough, on p. 112* the same scholars state that H cannot be used as the base manuscript for the edition of the *Seven manieren van minnen*, because the Limburg dialect is too different from the Brabantine used by Beatrijs of Nazareth, who came from Tienen. Therefore they chose Vv as the base text, because it provides the best text, but the German or eastern forms remain unexplained. This whole question deserves a new linguistic study that takes into account the most recent insights into the dating of manuscript H and the language of this manuscript (cf. Huls 2002, vol. 1, 70–71 n. 25). It might well be useful to consider the suggestion put forth by Mens 1947, 188–190, who detected a connection between the *Seven manieren van minnen* on the one hand, and the work of Mechthild von Hackeborn and Mechthild von Magdeburg, on the other.

dats die sute minne [Ah, sweet damsels of Jerusalem, the king led me to his wine cellar and instilled in me *caritate*, that is, sweet love].[268] This theme is a composite of several phrases from the Song of Songs. Its core is constituted by the sentence *Introduxit me in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me caritatem* ('He brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me.'; Song of Songs, 2:4). The noun *rex* does not appear in the Vulgate text, though it does in the very similar verse *Introduxit me rex in cellaria sua* ('The king hath brought me into his storerooms'; Song of Songs 1:3). The 'daughters of Jerusalem' (*filiae Hierusalem*) do, it is true, appear several times in the *Canticum canticorum*, but not in connection with the two passages cited here (Song of Songs 1:4, 2:7, 3:5, 5:8 and 5:16).[269] The author *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* apparently constructed a theme in a fairly associative fashion, though one nevertheless clearly in the spirit of the Song of Songs. Perhaps this is why he did not provide a version of his theme in Latin.[270]

By addressing his audience as 'damsels of Jerusalem,' the author immediately reveals his intention to create a role play based on the *Canticum canticorum*.[271] (I shall say no more at this point about the contents of Ls. 43, for a paraphrase of the entire sermon appears in § 3.1). It is tempting to assume an originally female audience for the sermon, based on this imagery of the damsels of Jerusalem, though that may be going too far. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, monks, too, had no difficulty identifying with the imagery of the mystical marriage, whereby the human soul represents the bride. Moreover, the otherwise so meticulous creators of manuscript H could easily have left *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* out of their collection if they had regarded this sermon as inappropriate for male readers—and this they did not do. Apparently Ls. 43 provided a useful lesson for these brethren, as well, though the table of contents describes it as *een harde geestelic sermoen* (*ende een harde lanc*) [A very spiritual sermon, and a very long one].[272]

It was clearly the intention of the author of *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* to provide a mystically-oriented sermon, and one certainly not

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[268] Kern 1895, 582:13–15.

[269] Cf. Faesen 2000, 141–142.

[270] If the author of Ls. 43 did indeed make an error here, then he was not the only one to do so. Later on in this section two further texts are passed in review in which the same reading appears—*Introduxit me rex in cellariam suam*—namely the *Rothschild Canticles* and the treatise bearing the same title. This was apparently a common reading in the Middle Ages.

[271] For more on this play, see Kern 1895, 583:30–34, cited at § 3.4.

[272] Kern 1895, 180:35–36.

intended for everyone's ears. (see § 3.2). This is apparent especially in the second half of the text, where the imagery of the 'wine cellar' is analyzed. The king leads the bride into his wine cellar, where a number of allegorical servants serve four specially prepared spiced drinks. These are spring water, wine, mead and mulled wine, respectively. Whoever partakes of the mulled wine henceforth desires nothing more than peace with the Bridegroom. When this state of repentance and humility is ultimately achieved, one receives five *lagtwarien* [medicines] from the king himself, which signify an equal number of aspects of mystical joy: peace, desire, satiation, drunkenness and, finally, the highest good: a deep repose. Ls. 43 begins, thus, on a fairly simple level, with a consideration of who Christ the King is and what His suffering means for mankind, only to end up at the highest level of spiritual unification.

Spiritual drunkenness and the mystical wine cellar are common topoi in mystical literature of the thirteenth century. In the Latin lives of the the religious women of Liège and Brabant the image of the spiritual wine cellar occurs frequently, for example in the *Vita Beatricis*, as well as in the life of Ida of Gorsleeuw of Rameia.[273] The future bishop of Cambrai, Guiard of Laon, also refers in passing to this wine cellar in his twelve fruits sermon *Et ex utraque parte*, in which 'we' spend far too little time and which we are too infrequently drunk.[274] This powerful image from the Song of Songs also found iconographic expression, for example in the *Rothschild Canticles*, which also contains the splendid palm tree miniature (fig. 14). A two-page spread in this manuscript contains on the left among other text the phrase *Introduxit me rex in cellam vinariam*, whereas on the opposite page there appears an illustration of a wine cellar.[275]

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[273] *Quid enim nisi caritatem sapere poterat;, que totiens in cellam vinariam introducta, totiens caritatis nectare debriari celestibusque delitijs satiari meruerat., que totiens caritatis gustum in gaudio the saluatoris fontibus hauriebat?* (*Vita Beatricis*; ed. Reypens 1964, 128,8–12) and *Postquam autem virgo dulcis se novit a certamine, quod diu sustinuerat, liberatam, ad Rachelis delicias post Lyæ turpitudinem se medullitus transferens, ascensiones in corde suo disposuit, et se supra se sublevans sumptis amoris pennulis, volatu desiderii, contemplativis tractibus sublimata, cœlestium arcana penetrans, quasi virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhæ et turis et omnis pulveris pigmentarii, introducta cella vinaria cum dilecto, delibuta cœlesti nectare, corde florigero, mente melliflua, lacteo spiritu, caritatem in se promeruit ordinari* (*Vita Idae de Lewis*; ed. *AASS* Oct. XIII (29 October), 113), respectively. See De Ganck 1991, vol. 3, 474–480 for more examples.

[274] Kern 1895, 550:13–15, cited at § 2.6.

[275] *Rothschild Canticles*, ff. 67v–68r. Hamburger 1990, 194 provides the text of f. 67v, and the miniature appears as figure 43.

Fig. 14. MS New Haven, Beinecke Rare Manuscript Library, MS. 404, f. 68r. The spiritual wine cellar according to the *Rothschild Canticles*.

A fairly widespread thirteenth-century tract is the *Introduxit me rex in cellam vinariam*, attributed to John of St John's in Vineis.[276] In terms of its contents it goes back to Hugh of Fouilly's *Claustrum animae* (who was prior of St Laurent-au-Bois 1152/53–1173), a voluminous work in which the allegory of the monastery of the soul or the heart plays a central role.[277] There was great confusion in the Middle Ages surrounding the authorship of these texts. Presumably the text bearing the title *Claustrum animae* and the incipit *Introduxit me rex in cellam vinariam*, which is included in the manuscript from Ter Kameren (see pp. 89–90), is to be attributed to John of St. John. That text appears in the thirteenth-century part of the manuscript, which contains primarily female *vitae*.[278] Despite the title, the wine cellar imagery is not very prominent in *Introduxit me rex in cellam vinariam*. This text builds further upon the *Claustrum animae*; the wine cellar (of the monastery) is here interpreted as a *claustrum spirituale*. Despite a number of superficial parallels, there is no connection between Ls. 43 and the *Introduxit me* tradition.[279] There is, moreover, a Middle Dutch translation of *Introduxit me*, all three known manuscripts of which date to the fifteenth century.[280]

Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre is probably the oldest and certainly the most complete Middle Dutch text on the mystic wine cellar. During the thirteenth century the motif was also not unknown in the vernacular literature. This appears from the off hand way in which a reference is made to the motif in Ls. 40. In the *Boec der minnen*, too, the imagery surrounding the wine cellar and mystical drunkenness is employed in a matter-of-course way. In the first part, Christ is portrayed as a house-husband who pours four allegorical types of wine, while in the second part *des wijns dranc* [the drinking of wine] is reckoned as the thirteenth

[276] On this text see Bauer 1973, 282–309 and 359–410 (ed. 377–400); cf. furthermore Bauer 1981.

[277] Ed. *PL* 176, 1017–1184 (where the text is still attributed to Hugh of St. Victor); cf. Bauer 1973, *passim*, and Bauer 1981, 1155.

[278] Brussels, KB, 8609–20, ff. 184v–186; for the ms. see § 1.5. This Brussels manuscript does not appear in the survey of manuscripts containing *Introduxit me rex in cellam vinariam* in Bauer 1973, 359–363.

[279] Cf. Bauer 1981, 1156.

[280] Ed. Bauer 1973, 404–410, who publishes the texts from the Berlin and Hague mss. in parallel format. The three mss. are: Berlin, SBB-PK, mgq 1086 (Nazareth, Geldern), ff. 122va–126rb, *Van een gheestelic cloester* (see also De Vreese 1900–1902, 137–141 (M[7]) and Costard 1992, 205); Ghent, UB, 1339, ff. 40r–47r, *Een zeer goet ende deuoet buecsken vander gheesteliker wijncellen of wijnkelre of cloestere der deuoter zielen* [A very good and devout little book concerning the spiritual wine cellar or monastery of devout souls] (see Reynaert 1996, 186–192); The Hague, KB, 132 F 17 (Tertiary nuns of St. Ursula, Delft), ff. 175va–179rb, *Dit is van enen geesteliken conuent* [This concerns a religious convent] (see also Stooker & Verbeij 1997, no. 297 (pp. 107–108)).

degree of contemplation.[281] Hadewijch was also familiar with the theme, for in her twelfth Poem in Stanzas she speaks of the drunkenness caused by *minne*.[282] In later centuries the motif of the wine cellar in Middle Dutch religious literature apparently became less popular. In the later transmission of Ls. 43, too, it somewhat limited.

> Ls. 43 is preserved exclusively in the corpus manuscripts of the *Limburg sermons*; besides H, it occurs also in Br1, ff. 19r–29v and W2, ff. 271v–299r.

Because the wine cellar motif is a fairly widespread, common motif in the Latin tradition, the possibility remains that Ls. 43 is an adaptation of a Latin source. But until a direct source is identified, I assume that *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* is an authentic Middle Dutch composition. One argument in favor of this assumption is the fact that Ls. 43 contains a passage that shows striking similarities to a portion of Hadewijch's Letter 18.[283] Part of this Letter, in which the eyes of the soul (Love and Reason) are discussed, was inspired by a passage from William of St Thierry's *De nature et dignitate amoris* [On the nature and dignity of love] in which the senses of the soul are discussed.[284] The passage in Letter 18 that corresponds to Ls. 43 cannot be traced directly to this paraphrase of William, but does stem from the motif of the eyes of the soul presented there.

It is instructive to compare both passages from *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* and Hadewijch's Letter, side by side. In the *Limburg sermon* the following excerpt appears in the discussion of the third point that the loving soul—who in the meantime has tasted the purest draught of the highest contemplation—must keep in mind, namely that she must observe the divine countenance of the Bridegroom.

> Oy sile, gin sult nit allene met verdronkenre pensingen vanden luttren drancke uwen amis bescouwen, mar gi sult in hem starkelic sien metten oegen der reinre pensingen, dats gi sult so hertelike ende meer dan hertelike altemale dor hem sien, soe dat doegen der pensingen bliven hangende in danschin ues lifs metten nagelen der bernender begerden. Dan alrist mogdi u verbliden metten guden sente Johanne Ewangeliste,

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[281] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 3:16–21, and 53:27–56,33, respectively.

[282] *Int conduut daer minne haer minne al scincket / Ende met minnen hare vriende al dronken drinket* (Van Mierlo 1942, vol. 1, 76, 56–57).

[283] The correspondence was discovered by Van Mierlo 1932, 379–380.

[284] On this identification, see Van Mierlo 1929, especially 50–55; cf. Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 147–148.

> die ontsliep op de borst Jhesu ende horde die heimelic wort die ontellic sin den volke, overmits die sute runinge dis heileges gestes.
> Gi sult starkelic op u lif sien, want di begerlic besiet dat hi mint, hi wert so onseghelic ontfenct dassin herte in hem selver wonderlike falgert onder die sute bordene der minnen ende wert ingetrect overmits dis stedeges levens der contemplatien, darse so grote sutecheit gesmact dasse alle dis vergit dat in ertrike begrepen es, ende penst dasse hars selfs liver derteg dusentech warven vertege eerse van der sutegheit keerde dar Cristus fundament af es.[285]
>
> [Ah, soul, you shall not only behold your beloved with the drunken contemplation of the pure draught, but you will gaze at him intensely through the eyes of pure contemplation, that is, you will see through him affectionately and more than affectionately, so that the eyes of contemplation will remain fixed upon the countenance of your beloved with the nails of burning passion. Then for the first time will you be able to rejoice with the good saint John the Evangelist, who slept upon the breast of Jesus and heard the divine words that men cannot hear, through the sweet prompting of the Holy Spirit.
> You will behold your beloved clearly, for he who beholds that which he loves with passion becomes so ineffably enkindled that his own heart fails him under the sweet burden of love, and is drawn in through the support of the steady life of contemplation of contemplation, in that he tastes such sweetness that he forgets the mortal world entirely, and considers that he would rather renounce himself thirty-thousand times before he would turn away from the sweetness of which Christ is the foundation.]

The lover must thus not only look at her beloved with loving eyes made drowsy by drunkenness, but with the penetrating gaze of Reason, as well. Only then will she receive the privilege enjoyed by John, who laid his head upon Christ's breast and was privy to what the Holy Spirit whispered into his ear.

Hadewijch's Letter 18 does not employ the allegorical framework of the mystic wine cellar where the loving soul meets the Bridegroom. This does not mean that the allegory is entirely absent, however, for in the first part of the Letter concerning the imagery of the kingdom, it is explained that God does not administer the kingdom Himself, but that his servants represent him. The passage that corresponds to Ls. 43 constitutes the Letter's conclusion (parallel phrases, either verbatim or in contents, appear here in italics):

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[285] Kern 1895, 596:15–597:2.

> Aldus suldi met ghehelen leven Gode soe staerkeleke anestaren *metten* soeten *oghen* der enigher affectien, die altoes liefs pleghet na hare ghenoeghen. *Dat es, du salt soe herteleke*, ja vele *meer dan herteleke*, dinen lieven God ane *sien*, soe dat dine gheënichde *oghen* dijnre begherten *blive ane hanghende in dat anschijn dijns liefs metten* dore gaenden *naghelen der berrender* gherijnessen die niet en cesseren. *Dan alre eerst moechdi* rusten *met sente Janne die op Jhesus borst sliep*. Ende alsoe doen noch die ghene die in vrihede der minnen dienen: si rusten op die soete, wise borst ende sien *ende horen die heimelike worde die onvertelleec* ende onghehoert *sijn den volke overmids die soete runinghe des Heilichs Gheests*.
> *Du salt* altoes *staerkeleke sien op dijn lief* dattu begheers, *want die* anestaert *dat hi* begheert, *hi wort* ontstekelike *ontfunct*, soe *dat sijn herte in hem* beghint te *faelgerenne* omme *de soete bordene der minnen. Ende* hi *wert in ghetrect overmids ghestadicheit* dies goeds *levens der contemplacien*, daermen Gode met altoes ane staert, soe dat minne altoes haer selven hem *soe suete smaken doet, dat hi al dies verghet dat in ertrike es ende penst* wat hem de vremde doen, *dat hi eer* CM *werf sijns selves verteghe* eer hi hem een poent liete ontbliven te werkene vanden dienste der werdegher minnen, *daer Christus fondament af es*.[286]
>
> [By your whole life, then, you should gaze fixedly at God with the sweet eyes of single affection, which always seeks the service of the Beloved with delight. That is, you should contemplate your dear God cordially, yes, much more than cordially, so that the eyes of your desire, both together, remain fixed to the countenance of your Beloved by the piercing nails of burning encounters that never cease. Then for the first time you can rest with Saint John, who slept on Jesus' breast. And this is what they do who serve Love in liberty; they rest on that sweetm wise breast and see and hear hidden words—which are ineffable and unheard-of by men—through the sweet whisper of the Holy Spirit.
> You should always look fixedly on your Beloved whom you desire. For he who gazes on what he desires becomes ardently enkindled, so that his heart within him begins to beat slowly because of the sweet burden of love. And through perseverance in this holy life of contemplation, wherein he continually gazes on God, he is drawn within God. Love ever makes him taste her so sweetly that he forgets everything on earth. Then he is determined, whatever befalls him at the hand of aliens, he will deny himself nine hundred times rather than neglect to perform one iota of the service of that worthy love of which Christ is the foundation.][287]

The similarities between these two passages are impossible to miss, but there are many others, both large and small, to be noted. To name but a few: where Hadewijch speaks of *soeten oghen der enigher affectien* [the sweet eyes of single affection], the *Limburg sermon* has *oegen der reinre pensingen*

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[286] Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 159:174–160:201.
[287] Transl. Hart 1980, 88:174.

[eyes of pure contemplation]. Both kinds of 'eyes' are subsequently described in virtually identical terms. Another idiosyncrasy introduced in both texts is the difference in the number of times the loving soul is willing to deny itself before surrending to the service of Christ: thirty thousand, as opposed to one hundred thousand. Where did this discrepancy come from? Rob Faesen observes that in the passage cited here, Ls. 43 takes a position contrary to Hadewijch's. Where Hadewijch associates desire with the service of love, which she performs out of love for God, the *Limburg sermon* associates desire with the personal experience of the divine.[288] Despite these internal contradictions, in Van Mierlo's view there could be no doubt but that *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* depended directly on Letter 18.[289] The not insignificant differences in word choice and syntax between the two passages cited here, as well as the divergent view of desire expressed by the two texts, however, do not readily allow such a conclusion. We would have to suppose that the author of Ls. 43 took the beautiful and nicely flowing Middle Dutch of Letter 18 and corrupted it fairly severely. It seems more likely that Hadewijch and the author of Ls. 43 used the same source text, which they then independently adapted for their own purposes. Hadewijch's adaptation was in the end perhaps more successful than the original.

2.10 This Is the Book of Lord Selfart's Rule *(Ls. 44)*

If the Palm Tree treatise is the best of the *Limburg sermons*, and *Van seven manieren van minnen* is the most beautiful, then *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen* [This is the Book of Lord Selfart's Rule] is the most pleasant to read. The allegory of the unworthy monastery, from which Ls. 44 derives its title, constitutes one of the rare humorous elements in the entire sermon collection, though here, too, the underlying tone of the piece is quite serious. The satire about the community where the monks follow the rule of lord Selfart (self-heart) is quite palatable for the modern reader, as well. The unworthy monastery is only a minor element in a long dissertation on the ideal monastic life. The text was

[288] Faesen 2000, 142–143.

[289] Van Mierlo 1932, especially 379–380. Despite the essential differences he makes note of, Faesen 2000, 142–143 does not in any way contradict this view.

presumably compiled from a variety of sources and yet possesses is own unique character.

Dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen is structured as a dialogue between a student who wishes to be instructed in the spiritual life, and an experienced master who has answers to all of his questions. The text begins with a brief encomium to God and all of His virtues, among which patience, humility and love are singled out. Immediately thereafter, following a smooth transition, the topic of the importance of asking questions is broached. The student says:

> Ay sekerlike, ets utermaten guet te horne van desen dogden. Nu vragdic gerne, constic wale vragen. Want mi segt dat mi van vragen wis werde. Drie denc lighen in der vragen: dirste es dat mi wete wis mi vrage, dander es wi dergene sie din mi vragt, ende terde ocht die sake nůt es dis mi vragt.
>
> [Ah, surely, it is a very good thing to hear about these virtues. I would eagerly ask a question of you now, if you would answer it. For I am told that one becomes wise through questioning. There are three main considerations to questions: the first is that one knows what one asks, the second is to whom one addresses the question, and the third whether the issue that one asks about is useful.][290]

Further on in the text, the utility of asking questions is again brought up:

> 'Ay, nů lere mi vragen!'
> 'Wilte leren vragen?'
> 'Ja ic!'
> 'So ganc vor een holen berch ende rup inwert. Nadien daste rups, dar na wert di gantwert. Also est metter vragen. Wilte mi vragen nutter saken, ic antwerdi gerne.'
>
> ['Ah, teach me now to ask questions!' 'Do you wish to learn how to question?' 'Indeed I do!' 'Then stand before a hollow mountain and shout into it. As you shout, so shall you be answered. So it is with questions. If you ask me meaningful questions, I will gladly answer them.'][291]

A meaningful question, so the message goes, invites a useful answer. Naturally *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen* is organized in such a way that only useful questions are posed.

The carefully organized dialogue of Ls. 43 is the glue that holds a number of more or less independent components together. The tightly

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[290] Kern 1895, 599:24–29.
[291] Kern 1895, 607:8–12.

choreographed use of 'Wechselrede' makes a somewhat exaggerated impression at times. We constantly encounter exchanges such as the following:

> 'Van sulker saken wistic gerne.'
> 'Wiltůt weten?'
> 'Ja ic.'
> 'Ic wilt u segghen.'
>
> ['I am eager to learn about such things.' 'Do you wish to know?' 'Indeed I do.' 'Then I will tell you.'][292]

In these bits of dialogue the author is clearly at pains to emulate colloquial speech. The indifference of youth to their own spiritual salvation is expressively illustrated by means of revealing their thoughts:

> Ja, du best jonc ende starc, scone ende rike, wis ende wale geboren. Sulste di selver aldus verderven? Din auder muder starf doch selver! Laet een andren penitentien duen, du comster noch tide genuch tu. Plech dins selfs ende leide gut leven. Du magt noch lange leven ende dins willen vel hebben.
>
> [Yes, you are young and strong, handsome and rich, wise and well born. Would you thus cause your own ruin? Your own aged mother herself died! Let others do penance, you have plenty of time for that. Take care of yourself and lead a good life. You may live a long life and do what you please']

Although colloquial speech is employed in many other *Limburg sermons*, often to invoke the oral atmosphere of the sermon, *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regel* is nevertheless much more lively. This is so not least because the text is a dialogue, and sermons are usually monologues, but it nevertheless seems as if Ls. 43 makes much more use of the 'language of the street.' Compared to the sermons on the vineyard of love or the mystic wine cellar, pregnant as they are with symbolism, this text is without doubt considerably more down to earth.

The first series of questions in Ls. 43 deals with heaven. The master explains that in the heavenly kingdom there lies the source of a river called *minne*; it divides into seven tributaries, which represent a number of essential virtues. The virtuous must navigate these rivers in the correct order: from Fear and Confession to Shame, following which ultimately the rivers Rest and Comfort may be navigated. The starting point is

[292] Kern 1895, 600:25–27.
[293] Kern 1895, 603:1–7.

the spring of Love. The student, impressed, next asks whether anyone belonging to a monastic order has ever missed this journey. Contrary to his assumptions, it appears that there have been many who have followed Shame to the river of False Comfort, and so via Vanity arrive at the monastery of Self Will. Its inhabitants observe the rule of Lord Selfart. The river metaphor is extended, for five further rivers spring from Self Will, namely Pride, Ire, Greed, Lechery and Disobedience.

The water imagery now gives way to the allegory of the monastery of Lord Selfart. *Selfart* is literally *self-aard* in Modern Dutch, or 'self-will' and identifies the character as selfishness personified. The tone of Ls. 43 sharpens considerably at this point. The dialogue is virtually abandoned: the master is prompted to describe Lord Selfart's monastery by a question from the student, but does not relinquish the floor for quite some time thereafter. He describes the situation in the monastery of Self Will by characterizing its inhabitants in a merciless way. First up are the monastery's officials. They bear names that are difficult to translate yet pregnant with meaning: monastery's abbot is *Quaetkint* [Evilchild], the prior is called *Sonderdogt* [Virtueless], the cellarer is *Cleper van den werelde* [Yelper of the world] while *Kivenere* [Wrangler] appears as the cantor—*als hem sin overste iet heit duen dat weder sinen wil es, so begint hi te kiven ende te sengen een honsmesse dir enen jode verdriten mach* [if his abbot tells him to do something that he doesn't like, then he begins to wrangle and sings such a false mass that it would bring a Jew to tears].[294] Next come the brethren, with equally expressive and telling names: *Druchdiselven* [Deceive-thyself], *Clotere* [Trifler] *Agtersprake* [Slanderer] and so forth. Chief among the monastery's brethren is brother *Heerch*—presumably signifying 'pride' or haughtiness'—who has his nose high in the air.[295]

> Ende als hi deen been over dander legt ende begint te seghen van sinre heerschapheit, wie ric ende van wat geborden hi ware ende wat heerheide hi hadde ende welc een ambagtsman hi ware ende wat hi dreve in der werelde—mar bedder die wile, het war hem vele nůtter.
>
> [And if he crosses his legs and begins to speak of his high station, how rich and well-born he is and what seigniorial rights he enjoys, and how he is such a high-ranking official and has done great things in the world—well,

[294] Kern 1895, 604:3–5.

[295] According to the *MNW* III, 225, the intended form in Ls. 44 is *heersch*, which means 'proud' or 'haughty'. Cf. Kern 1895, 604.

> he might better have spent that time in prayer, for it would have been of greater use to him.][296]

Thus the disciples of Lord Selfart are depicted in all of their splendid corruption, up to and including the brothers *Weenwoers* [?] and *Clap Onnutte* [Senseless Chatter], who on behalf of their monastery venture preaching into the world to recruit new brethren.

Following the allegory of the unworthy monastery, the question-and-answer structure of the *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen* is again resumed. The student asks how one can recognize such false brethren and how one can get them back on the path of righteousness again. The master obliges with a series of observations that are organized around the question of how one may achieve the pure monastic life. The student receives a number of painful lessons in self-awareness. He learns to recognize that his own self-conceit is considerable, whereas in reality he is not worth a straw. Thus, for example, he erroneously thinks that that he is handsome.

> 'Ay, nů sege mi dog: war ombe ben ic onscone, want mi dogte dat ic harde scone ware?'
> 'Dogdi dis?'
> 'Jaet.'
> 'Nu pruve dan an di selver! Du best overtrect met eenre hut ende wat dar onder es dats onscone. Pruve! Wat gaet di uten oegen, uter nasen, uten monde, uten oeren? Ic swige dis, dat grover es. Dus magte weten de scoenheit van den vlesche.'
>
> [Ah, tell me now: why am I ugly, for I thought that I was very handsome?' 'Did you think so?' 'Indeed I did.' 'Well, consider yourself, then! You are covered by a skin and what lies beneath it is ugly. Consider! What comes out of your eyes, your nose, your mouth and your ears? I will say nothing of things even more crude. Thus you may know the beauty of the flesh.'][297]

Via this kind of digression upon the sad state of mankind Ls. 43 repeatedly ends up at the question: how do I know what the right monastery is and how will I recognise it? One of the last questions to be posed is that of what one is to do if he discovers that he is living in an unworthy monastery. The master explains to his pupil that, if one brings the evils to the attention of a few responsible monastic

[296] Kern 1895, 604:10–15.
[297] Kern 1895, 610:8–15.

authorities, all will be well in the end. But the very fact that he has included the allegory of Lord Selfart in his narrative speaks against such a confident conclusion.

Dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen is a 'Fremdkörper' within the corpus of the *Limburg sermons*. Ls. 44 is less successful at passing for a sermon even than the tract-like texts dressed up to resemble one. And yet this dialogue is described in the table of contents of manuscript H as *harde gude leringe ende een lanc sermoen*. [very good teaching, and a long sermon],[298] But if we recall that the *Limburg sermons* were intended as a collection of texts for oral presentation, then this qualification becomes clearer. The texts included in the compilation had to be suitable for reading out loud—and in light of this sometimes took on the character of a sermon. *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen* was, thanks to its status as a dialogue and lively language, ideally suited to be read out loud.

Whereas for most of the interpolated *Limburg sermons* a Middle Dutch origin may be assumed, in the case of *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen* we know that it is a translation of the Middle High German *Herr Selbharts Regel*.[299] Manuscript H is at this point in time still the oldest textual witness, but practically all the other surviving witnesses are in German. As demonstrated by the manuscript from Erlangen, which dates to around 1300, *Herr Selbharts Regel* itself has a long history. Moreover, Herr Selbhart is no stranger to Middle High German literature. Hugo von Trimberg refers to this dubious character in the prologue to *Der Renner*, completed in 1300: *Die knehte læst her Selphart / Die vor ir mouter wâren zart* [Herr Selphart unleashes the boys / who until then had an intimate relationship with their mother].[300] And the fifteenth-century Franciscan Johannes Pauli, in his eighth sermon, was still able to brand the Sarabites, religious of doubtful alloy, with a simple reference to this questionable figure: *Die leptend in Sant Selberts orden, warent falsch und bös glichsner* [Those who lived in St. Selbert's order were false and evil hypocrites].[301] Presumably a transcript of *Herr Selbharts Regel* traveled

[298] Kern 1895, 181:2–3.

[299] An overview of the current state of scholarship dealing with *Herr Selbharts Regel* is provided by Warnock 1992. Little work has been done on this text; see among others Bauer 1973, 159–160. Nor is there an edition of the complete MHG text that served as the exemplar for Ls. 44; a few partial editions have been published (cf. Warnock 1992, 1057).

[300] Ehrismann 1908, 11:265–266; on Hugo von Trimberg see further Schweikle 1983.

[301] Warnock 1970, 106:327–328.

with the *St. Georgen sermons* which formed the basis for the translated *Limburg sermons*.[302]

> *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen* appears otherwise in Middle Dutch only in Br1, ff. 156–165v. The Middle High German transmission is comprised of the following manuscripts, according to Robert G. Warnock (among which are several corpus manuscripts of the *St. Georgen sermons* tradition): ms. Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek, cod. 292, ff. 228va–229va (only the allegory of the unworthy monastery; ca. 1300, Middle Frankish); ms. Z, ff. 188ra–194rb (early fifteenth century; Alemannic); ms. Sa, ff. 262r–278v (1456; Alemannic); ms. St, ff. 19r–20v (excerpt; pre-1462; Westswabian). Warnock distinguishes between a branch *****Y, to which manuscripts H and Erlangen, as well as the *Baumgarten geistlicher Herzen* (see below) belong, and a branch *****Z, which contains the remaining three manuscripts.[303] The transmisison of *Herr Selbharts Regel* is much less closely associated with the *St. Georgen sermons* than Warnock supposed; the text in the very important manuscript Z was bound into the codex at a later date, while manuscripts Sa and St are distinctly late. Nevertheless, tentative philological research by Kurt Otto Seidel has demonstrated that Warnock's division is useful. There is an older redaction (Warnock's *****Y), which comprises manuscripts H and Erlangen as well as the *Baumgarten*, but which nevertheless shows signs of modification. The three textual witnesses from *****Z go back to the original text of the *Herr Selbharts Regel*, of which Sa appears to give the purest text.[304]

Another, perhaps more convincing argument for the Middle High German background of *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen* is the fact that a large portion of it has been incorporated into the *Baumgarten geistlicher Herzen* [The Orchard of Spiritual Hearts].[305] The *Baumgarten* must have been composed between 1270–1290, given the picture presented by its transmission history in East Swabia (the region surrounding Augsburg). This text is a compilation of ca. two hundred passages of diverse nature, which are fairly loosely connected. Among the most important sources for this compilation are the Latin and German sermons and tracts by the Friars Minor. Berthold von Regensburg and David von

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[302] Cf. Seidel 2003, 243.

[303] Warnock 1992, 1060.

[304] I owe thanks for this data to Kurt Otto Seidel, who performed a sample collation of the six aforementioned texts (Letters of 23 February and 19 July 2000) and constructed a tentative stemma based on that sampling. Further research onto this interesting text with its complicated transmission history is a desideratum; from the view of the Dutch side of things, one would certainly need to include consideration of the only other Middle Dutch witness, Br1.

[305] Ed. Unger 1969, 187–450; cf. Unger 1978.

Augsburg. Because of the clear mark left by Franciscan sources upon the *Baumgarten geistlicher Herzen*, among other reasons, the text itself is also localised in that same milieu. Candidates for the place of origin most worthy of consideration include the circles of David von Augsburg and the monastery of the Friars Minor in that city.[306]

> The *Baumgarten geistlicher Herzen* is a compendium of all kinds of texts, both long and short. The eclectic nature of the text is seen as a characteristic feature of early Franciscan literature in German. This principle of textual composition also appears, for example, in the vernacular writings of David von Augsburg.[307] It shows up elsewhere as well, for example in the *Heilige Regel des vollkommenen Leben*, from the same period, though Cistercian in origin. It would seem more likely, then, that the history of vernacular religious prose begins with the practice of compiling loose texts and fragments into a cohesive whole.[308] The creation of large collections of independent prose texts such as the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* may in that light be considered a further step in the direction of an independent prose tradition in the vernacular.

Three chapters of the *Baumgarten geistlicher Herzen* correspond for the most part with three passages from *Herr Selbharts Regel*, which together comprise about half of the latter text.[309] Given the nature of the *Baumgarten* as a compilation, we are virtually compelled to assume that it was this text that borrowed from *Herr Selbharts Regel*. This means that the *terminus ante quem* for *Herr Selbharts Regel* should be moved forward to a date prior to 1270–1290, when the *Baumgarten* was composed. The borrowing from *Herr Selbharts Regel* on the one hand, and the strong Franciscan coloring of the *Baumgarten* on the other, naturally raises the question of whether the text concerning Selfart itself did not also originate in the circles of the (Augsburg) Friars Minor.[310] If an eclectic structure can be considered evidence for this, then we may at any rate

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[306] Cf. Ruh 1984a, especially 56–57, Unger 1969, 181–183 and Unger 1978.

[307] Cf. Ruh 1984a.

[308] This methodology remained popular even after the thirteenth century, e.g. in the *Grote zielentroost* [Great Consolation for the Soul], an eclectic text that was composed in the Lowlands or adjoining Dutch-speaking regions during the course of the fourteenth century (see further Palmer 1992).

[309] The correspondences between the two texts were first noted in Warnock 1992, 1058–1059. The parallel, though not identical, passages in Ls. 44 and *Baumgarten* are, in order of appearance: Kern 1895, 609:15–610:28 and Unger 1969, 276:2–277:27 (cap. 86), Kern 1895, 610:29–613:14 and Unger 1969, 413:14–416:91 (ch. 193), and Kern 1895, 614:23–615:33 and Unger 1969, 220:2–221:26 (ch. 29).

[310] Warnock 1992, 1058–1059 lists various arguments in favor of a Franciscan origin, for none of which any direct evidence can be produced.

observe that *Herr Selbharts Regel* shares this characteristic. Here, after all, we find the allegory of the rivers of love, an allegory on the unworthy monastery and a short series of brief discussions and lists of memorable issues compiled within the larger context of a dialogue. The appearance of the brothers *Weenwoers* (the German has *Itelspot* [Idle Criticism]) and *Clap Onnutte* as members of Lord Selfart's monastery may perhaps be interpreted as thinly-veiled Fransican self-criticism. Sending out itinerant preachers to recruit new was afterall a tactic typical of the Franciscans and some of the smaller mendicant orders.[311]

> That the monastic satire enjoyed an independent existence is at any rate demonstrated by manuscript Erlangen of ca. 1300, in which the story of Herr Selbhart and his monastery appears separately. The text bears the striking rubric: *Regula Selphardi non ordinis est Berenhardi*.[312] It was apparently necessary to emphasize that Selfart was not a Cistercian. The monastic satire is the only Middle High German text in this manuscript, which further contains the Latin *Sermones ad religiosos* (!) by the Fransiscan Berthold von Regensburg. Thus it is here transmitted in a Franciscan context.

The following dialogue demonstrates that the author pulls no punches when it comes to criticism of the monastic orders:

> 'Nu berigt mi vort: es enech gordent mensche die desen wech misse?'
> 'Jaet, vele.'
> 'Wie mach dat wesen?'
> 'Dis berigt ic di aldus. Welken tit si comen sin ter vrogten ende souden varen din regten wech metten rouwe in die bigte, so ontmutse donselech water van scamen ende drifse weder in een ander water, heit Valsch troest. Dar in varense alsic di besceiden wille.'
> 'Nu berigt mi in welken levene dese mogen wesen.'
> 'In welken?'
> 'Ja.'
> 'Ic wane in allen levene.'
> 'Ami, wat segste? So ontsie ic mi datter in swarten clostren vel sie, ende in sulken andren levene die noit vor scame ter regter bigten en quamen.'
> 'Dats waer.'
>
> [Now tell me further: are there any among the ordained who stray from this path?' 'Yes, many.' 'How can that be?' 'I will tell you as follows. At such time as they have become fearful and would travel the way of righteousness via the remorse of confession, they encounter the dark waters of shame, which flows into another stream, called False Consolation. There

[311] For the sermons of the mendicants see D'Avray 1985, 43–63.
[312] Ed. Wackernagel 1873, 991–996.

> they wander as I will describe to you.' 'Now tell me in which order these folk appear.' 'In which one?' 'Yes' 'I do believe in all of them.' 'Woe is me, what say you now? I now realize that there are many who dwell in the black monasteries, and in other such orders who out of shame have never done true confession.' 'That's true'.][313]

The term *swarten clostren* undoubtedly refers to benedictine monasteries, where the monks wear black habits. In the corresponding passage in manuscript Z, the Dominicans, the Friars Minor, the 'Grey monks' and the Teutonic Order are named, in addition to the Benedictines.[314] Presumeably this passage appeared in the original version of *Herr Selbharts Regel*, for it has also been incorporated into Sa, which provides the best text.[315] In the other texts from the *Y group, manuscript Erlangen and the *Baumgarten geistlicher Herzen*, the phrase does not occur, so further, older material for comparison does not exist. It remains unclear why the translator of Ls. 44 mentions only the Benedictines at this juncture. Was he particularly critical of the ancient order?[316] In that case we would not have to look amongst the Benedictines for the creator of the *Limburg sermons* (unless in this instance we are dealing with a particularly pithy piece of self-criticism). But the value of such observations remains limited as long as the textual history of *Herr Selbharts Regel*, both in Middle High German and Middle Dutch, has not been more thoroughly studied.[317]

In *Het gilde van de blauwe schuit*, Herman Pleij counted the allegory of Lord Selfart among the quasi-orders and pseudo-rules, which floursihed in particular in the urban literature during the late Middle Ages in the Low Countries. Pleij dates the text to the early fifteenth century, but goes on to observe that, compared to other parodic texts concerning subcultures, the monastic satire of Lord Selfart exhibits a striking lack

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[313] Kern 1895, 602:12–23.

[314] Ed. Wackernagel 1847, 901–906, which provides only the monastic satire (with context) based on Z; the passage in question is in k. 901 (cf. Seidel 2003, 247 n. 152).

[315] Personal communication Kurt Otto Seidel.

[316] Seidel 2003, 247 n. 152 suggests that the absence of the Dominicans in H constitutes an argument for a Cistercian background for the *LS* collection. But one might just as well assert that H could not have originated amongst the circles of Dominicans, Franciscans, or the German order.

[317] MS. Br1 is of little help on this issue, given the fact that the scribe has removed the sting from the passage. The student asks here whether everyone walks the path of virtue, whereupon the master replies that unbelievers and those who live in mortal sin most certainly do not. Then he recommends the *gheoerdende liede* in order to walk the path of fear and confession (f. 158r).

of irony.[318] In the tale *Vanden covente* [Concerning the convent], for example, recorded in the Van Hulthem manuscript dating to ca. 1400, a cynical author ridicules younger sons of noble lineage, who may be monks, but who are wont to live as large as they can in their monasteries.[319] In contrast, *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen* exhibits a high degree of seriousness and a deep concern for the purity of the monastic life. The discrepancy that Pleij believes he observes can be easily resolved with reference to the dating of *Herr Selbharts Regel*, which must be placed in the second half of the thirteenth century. The ironic and sarcastic literature so characteristic of the urban life during the Middle Ages was at that time still in its infancy. *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen* belongs, then, to an older cultural phase, one that was less ambiguous and cynical. The author of Ls. 44 is not an outsider criticising church institutions, but a cleric who, by means of satire attempts to inspire his clerical audience to embrace a more pious and pure monastic life. Thanks to the translator of the *Limburg sermons* —for it seems in every way likely that *Herr Selbharts Regel* and the *St. Georgen sermons* were translated by the same person—Middle Dutch literature boasts an example of monastic satire from this very early period.[320]

> Monastic allegories are certainly not uncommon in the religious literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The *Claustrum animae* and its derivative *Introduxit me rex in cellam sua* have already been discussed in connection with Ls. 43, both of which belong to this genre (see § 2.9). The *Vita Beatricis* contains a meditative exercise whereby Beatrijs van Nazareth furnishes her heart like a monastery.[321] There is also an Old French text in which *l'abaïe dou Saint Esperit* [the abbey of the Holy Spirit] is described; this work offers a spiritual monastery for those who are not in a position to actually take holy orders.[322] But in all of these examples we are dealing with ideal monasteries, and not with satires that emphasize

[318] Pleij 1983, 98–99.

[319] *Vanden covente* is printed in Brinkman & Schenkel 1999, vol. 1, nr. 66 (pp. 377–381); cf. Hogenelst 1997, vol. 2, nr. 59 (p. 54).

[320] Warnock 1992, 1060–1061 does point to a possible connection between *Herr Selbharts Regel* and the 15th and 16th-century satirical literature: in *Der Boiffen Orden*, a parodical text printed in Cologne, a certain *Bruder Tzijtverluyss* makes an appearance, a friar we know from Ls. 44 as *bruder Titverlis* (Kern 1895, 605:15–16). On *Der Boiffen Orden* see Stöllinger-Löser 2000; cf. also Pleij 1983, 99–100.

[321] On this and other exercises of Beatrijs, see § 3.5.

[322] This unpublished text was contained in the now-lost ms. Metz, Bibliothèque Municipal (see § 4.5); cf. Meyer 1886, 49 and Reynaert 1994, 220–221.

every unworthy aspect thereof.[323] In this light, *Herr Selbharts Regel* remains an exceptional text.

2.11 This Concerns the Blessed Soul *(Ls. 45)*

The mystical sermon *Dets van der heilger selen* [This Concerns the Blessed Soul] begins with a scriptural passage in Latin: *Anima mea liquefacta est ut dilectus locutus est et cetera* ['My soul melted when he spoke]; Song of Songs 5:6).[324] It appears from the Middle Dutch translation that follows that the *et cetera* was not written for nothing, for the actual theme comprises a number of further verses (Song of Songs 5:6–8):

> Min sile es ontoit sent min vrint te mi sprac. Jc sugten ende en vans nit. Ic ripen ende hin antwerde mi nit. Si vonden mi, de huden van der stat. Si slugen mi ende wonden mi. Si namen mi minen mantel, de huden van der muer. Dogter van Jherusalem, verkundeget minen vrinde dat ic quele van sinre minnen.
>
> [My soul melted when my friend spoke. I sought him and found him not. I called him and he answered me not. They found me, the keepers of the city. They struck me and wounded me. They took away my veil, those keepers of the walls. Daughters of Jerusalem, tell my beloved that I languish with love for him.][325]

The anxious searching of the bride for her beloved in the Song of Songs constitutes the leitmotif of Ls. 43. This extended theme is divided into four phases, which are explained in the course of the sermon, although not in any systematic fashion. Reminders in the form of first words in Latin are constantly provided, following which the full text is given only in Middle Dutch. This method is followed as well when biblical or other arguments are cited.

But before the author embarks on his explanation of the biblical text, he considers the needs of his audience. That audience consists of *volkomen lide* [perfect people], to whom one may not serve up light fare. He will have to provide *gestelik leringe* [spiritual (mystical) teaching], given the fact that his listeners wish to live in the spirit, rather than the

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[323] Bauer 1981, on 'Herzklosterallegorien', lists various other examples of monastic allegory (among which in k. 1157 ch. 32 from the *Baumgarten geistlicher Herzen* and in k. 1159 *Herr Selbharts Regel*).

[324] Kern 1895, 616:3–4. The Vulgate reads: *Anima mea liquefacta est ut locutus est.*

[325] Kern 1895, 616:5–10.

flesh. They want to follow *der gesteliker brut* [the mystical bride], who says: 'My soul melted when he spoke.'[326] The term *gestelik*, used a number of times in this context, appears much more frequently in the *Limburg sermons*, in a number of different contexts. In the table of contents to manuscript H the sermons Ls. 5, Ls. 26, Ls. 39, Ls. 41–43 as well as Ls. 45 are classified as (*harde*) *geestelic*. This means at any rate that these are sermons containing abstract subject matter which is not comprehensible by just anyone. Given the theme of the interpolated *Limburg sermons* in this series alone, there is something to be said for equating the use of *geestelic* here more or less with the modern term 'mystic.'[327] The same holds true for *Dets van der heiliger sielen*. Ls. 45 presents some very advanced material which is not suitable for the average lay person. The intended audience of this sermon can apparently identify itself with the languishing bride of the Song of Songs.

Ls. 45 continues with the message that those who wish to live completely must repeat with the bride: 'My soul has thawed since my friend spoke to me' The male figure in the Song of Songs is thus designated as a *vrint* (boy)friend—whereas in other *Limburg sermons* we regularly encounter more explicit terms like *amis* [beloved] or *brudegom* [bridegroom]—and the woman as (girl)friend (not bride). Perhaps unnecessarily, the sermon briefly lays out the rules of the game once again: the girlfriend stands for the blessed soul and the boyfriend for Our Lord. Thereafter, with a fair degree of detail and the aid of scriptural citations, it is argued that the boyfriend may address his lover in three ways: via preachers, via his writings (the bible and the canon) and via *inge gratie* [fervent grace]. This last phrase is salient, for it presupposes immediate recognition of the mystic experience on the part of the audience.[328] The medium of inner grace receives, moreover, the most extended explanation, with the aid of a pronouncement by Job: *Te mi es gesegt tferholne wort ende min oere hevet verstaen* ['Now there was a word spoken to me in private, and my ears by stealth as it were received the

[326] Cf. Kern 1895, 616:15–21; this passage is cited (in two parts) and discussed in further detail in § 3.2.

[327] In a brief lemma, the *MNW* II, 1104 provides two main meanings: 'spiritual', as opposed to 'physical', and 'pious'. This does not cover the complete range of nuances of the term *gestelike* in the *LS*. Illustrative in this context is the addition by a corrector in H, who in Ls. 31 inserted the phrase *gestelike te verstaene* in order to indicate that the palmtree in this sermon should be interpreted figuratively (Kern 1895, 440,1).

[328] Cf. Faesen 2000, 143.

veins of its whisper' Job 4:12].[329] A 'secret word' was whispered into Job's ear by the Holy Spirit. This, maintains the author of *Dets van der heiliger sielen*, is the inner grace, which exalts the human heart and banishes fleshly desire in favor of a yearning for heaven. The way in which this third way is introduced leads one to suspect that the author may well have thought that this mystic path was open to anyone in the audience listening to Ls. 45.

By means of this third mode of speaking, the author of Ls. 45 sets worldly concerns against spiritual. *Die werelt mint dat vleschelic es, ende der heilge geest es gestelic*. (The world loves that which belongs to the flesh, but the blessed soul is spiritual).[330] Elaborating on this distinction, he explains that it was *dese gestelic runinge* (spiritual inner prompting) that thawed the heart of the beloved. This brings us once again to the ultimate theme of Ls. 45. The rather curious translation of the Latin *liquefacta* with *onttoit* (thawed)—we would have expected 'melted'—now becomes clear. The author is contrasting the cold, frozen heart with one that has thawed. The denier Peter and the sinner Mary Magdalene had frozen hearts, because they could not or would not hear the secret inner voice.

From this point on *Dets van der heilger selen* follows its theme from the Song of Songs. It is divided into four parts which are presented both in Latin and vernacular translation, following which they are applied to the theme of the thawed heart. In the process, as is the case throughout the *Limburg sermons* and the *St. Georgen sermons*, a great deal of attention is paid to concrete elements in the biblical text that allow for allegorisation. Thus the guards on the city walls are equated with preachers and prelates, who must be prepared to sacrifice their lives for the pastoral care of their charges. The weapons with which these guards are equipped, sword and arrows, are drawn from other appropriate biblical texts. Paul equates God's word with the sword of the spirit (Eph. 6:17), whereas in the psalms David speaks of sharp-pointed arrows (Ps. 45:6). In this manner a web of biblical citations is woven—references to the Church Fathers are entirely lacking in this sermon—with the aid of which Ls. 45 exhorts the blessed soul to let Christ into her heart.

[329] Kern 1895, 618:24.
[330] Kern 1895, 619:6–7.

Thus the theme is explicated phrase by phrase, especially from the perspective of the third mode of speaking, whereby the boyfriend speaks secretly to his beloved. In the closing exhortation, the other main thematic thread in Ls. 45—the imagery of warmth and cold—is nicely maintained:

> Aldus hebdi gehort de grote begerde van der minnender brut ende den ernstaggen dinst der engele ende den suten troest sbrudegoms. Nu keert weder tuwen herten, ende en laetse nit bevrisen in hare tracheit, verwermse metten vure der ontfencder devotien, verweckerse met starker compunctien, rigtse op in begertliker minnen, slutse jhegen allen wereltliken commer, soe dat u boden mogen seghen tuwen vrinde, metter gesteliker brut, dat gi quelt van sinre minnen.
>
> [Thus you have heard of the great desire of the loving bride and the ernest service of the angel and the sweet consolation of the bridegroom. Now return once more to your heart and do not let it freeze over in its sluggishness, warm it with the flame of burning devotion, revive it with strong compunction, raise it up in passionate love, guard it against all worldly concerns, so that you may say to your friend, along with the mystic bride, that you languish for his love.][331]

The soul must prepare her chamber, so that she may receive the bridegroom worthily when he comes.

Dets van der heilger selen is a sermon with a high degree of abstraction, as the author makes clear from the very outset. This is demonstrated as well by the many Latin citations it contains. Furthermore, the regular reflections on the office of preacher and the role played by spirituality in the guidance of loving souls are remarkable. The preacher engages in a dialogue, as it were, with his audience and explicates their existing relationship (see § 3.2). Concerning the literary historical backgrounds and the sources of Ls. 45 there is little to be said. It strikes me as not unreasonable to suppose that this sermon goes back to a Latin original, though this need not necessarily be the case. After all, most of the *Limburg sermons* achieve a fairly high degree of sophistication, yet for only one of them has a Latin parallel been identified. For the time being, we know *Dets van der heilger selen* only in its Middle Dutch form. It should be considered, however, whether Ls. 45 has roots in the German tradition. J.H. Kern thought that all the *Limburg sermons* were translations from Middle High German, in which he was certainly wrong. But he points to a number of terms in Ls. 45 which do not

[331] Kern 1895, 625:24–32.

look Dutch and might well be explained by reference to a German background.[332] Thus far, however, no German exemplar for *Dets van der heilger selen* has been found.

> Apart from its appearance in H, Ls. 45 is preserved three times, all of which are in corpus manuscripts, namely, in Am, ff. 177va–181vb, B1, ff. 75r–78r and Br1, ff. 29v–35v. The text was thus already in existence in the H* stage.

2.12 This Concerns How the Virgin Mary Is Like an Enclosed Orchard *(Ls. 46)*

The penultimate text among the sixteen interpolated *Limburg sermons* also makes full use of the imagery of the orchard. In contrast to the preceding sermons, the theme of *Dets wie onse vrouwe een besloten boegart es* [This is How the Blessed Virgin Mary is Like an Enclosed Orchard] is borrowed not directly, but obliquely from the Bible via the liturgy, namely from an antiphon: *Hortus conclusus est, etc. Dese anthyphene sinct die heilge kerke int ere der hoger vrouwen, dir hoegheit dengle loven, ende wonderen sich hare werdecheit.* [She is an enclosed garden. Holy Church sings this antiphon in praise of the exalted woman, whose glory the angels praise, and they marvel at her worthiness.][333] It was not uncommon in the monastic tradition to base a sermon on liturgical phrases; in fact, it was an obvious thing to do, given that the monastic sermon was itself a part of the liturgy.[334] Ls. 46 is, as far as can be determined, the first Middle Dutch sermon on a liturgical theme (together, perhaps, with Ls. 48). The passage cited above is presumeably a reference to *Hortus conclusus est, Dei Genetrix, hortus conclusus, fons signatus*, the well-known antiphon

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[332] Ls. 45 translates a phrase in a citation from Paul with *Sugter prufenisse van Jhesu Cristo, di in mi sprict?* [Do you seek proof of Jesus Christ, who speaks in me?] (Kern 1895, 617,8). The form *sugter* is unusual; we would expect something like *sukeder*. The term can be explained via either a Latin or a MHG source (Kern 1895, 617, apparatus). In the passage from Job cited above Ls. 45 uses the word *dup* a couple of times (Kern 1895, 618:25 and 619:12). The word does not occur in the *MNW* II; we do find '*dupe*' [dope, idiot], but that cannot be the intended meaning here. The form *dup* may be readily explained if we assume that MHG *diube* [thief] lies behind it (cf. Kern 1895, apparatus). Ls. 17 has the expected MDu. form *dief* (Kern 1895, 370:1). A much more thorough linguistic study would be necessary to confirm Kern's suggestion.

[333] Kern 1895, 626:7–9.

[334] Cf. Kienzle 2000c, 271.

from the liturgy for the feast of the Assumption.[335] The author of Ls. 46 could be certain that his audience knew this phrase—inspired by the Song of Songs—by heart, thanks to years of experience in singing it in Divine Office.

The antiphon from the Office of the Blessed Virgin is the basis for the prelude of Ls. 46, which consists of a brief encomium to the Mother of God. The author takes the opportunity to demonstrate his humility: as a sinner he is unworthy to speak of Mary, nevertheless he will not be silent, but will sing her praises at every opportunity. He does this by stating, in the words of Solomon: *Ortus conclusus, fons signatus* ('a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up'; Song of Songs, 4:12). This brings us to the biblical theme of his sermon, and allows us to include this *Limburg sermons*, too, among the texts inspired by the Song of Songs. But here it is not the loving soul, but rather Mary who plays the role of bride.

Wi lesen van vier boegarden [We read of four orchards], says the author, and subsequently illustrates, with the help of biblical passages, which orchards these are and what they contain. The 'obedient orchard' is the heavenly paradise, that can only be reached by means of obedience; the 'common orchard' is the holy Church, which has been established on earth; the 'special orchard' is the soul of every good person, in which God may dwell; the 'extraordinary orchard' is *der besloten boegart ende der besigelt borne, dar wi bi verstaen Marien, de muder ons heren* [the enclosed orchard and the sealed fountain, by which we are to understand Mary, the mother of our Lord].[336] The obedient orchard, the first, is described in just a few lines, but more room is reserved for each of the subsequent orchards. In the course of these descriptions the garden imagery is consistently maintained. Thus Paul and the other apostles, as well as the patriarchs and the prophets, are trees which grow in the 'general orchard' of the Church. In this orchard a fountain springs forth from the scriptures, and the four rivers that flow through it are the evangelists.

The 'special orchard' of each individual soul in which God finds a dwelling is also adorned with trees and plants. Its point of departure is the verse from the Song of Songs, *Decendi in ortum meum et cetera. Ic*

[335] Cf. Hesbert 1963–1979, vol. 3, nr. 3137, but the antiphons nrs. 3135, 3136 and 3138 also deserve our attention, for they show strong agreement in terms of content. In the Leeuwarden ms. of Ls. 46 (see text). the theme is *Hortus conclusus, Dei Genetrix* (but all four of the antiphons Hesbert identifies begin with these words).

[336] Kern 1895, 631:28–29.

ginc in minen boegart dor te sinne dappele van der dellen ['I went down into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valleys'; Song of Songs 6:10].[337] The Lord walks through his orchard and inspects the state of his crops. Here grow, among other things, the trees of humility, generosity and love. He pays a great deal of attention as well to the flowers that grow there: the roses of the martyrs, the violettes of the confessors and the lilies of the virgins. It is especially from the lilies that the Lord derives much pleasure, says the author of *Dets wie onse vrouwe een besloten boegart es*. For it is primarily the virgins who provide him with sustenance, as they epitomise the virtues of righteousness and charity. Blessed are the virgins who provide him with breakfast each morning and serve him supper in the evening, but even more blessed are those who constantly nourish him.

In Ls. 46 the lion's share of attention falls to Mary, the 'special orchard'. Her two most emulatable characteristics are derived from the Song of Songs theme in the sermon, here, too, couched in terms of botanical imagery. The author wishes to present just two trees from the special garden, namely those of humility and virginity. Thereafter he applies the epithet *hortus conclusus*, *fons signatus*, attributed to Solomon, to Mary. She is an enclosed garden because she had been filled with divine grace and thus rendered free of sin. And she is the sealed fountain because she conceived Christ as a virgin and remained a virgin thereafter.

From this latter virtue of Mary's, the main theme of his sermon, the author of *Dets wie onse vrouwe een besloten boegart es* proceeds to the conclusion, in which he exhorts his listeners to a greater and deeper devotion to Mary. *Eertse dan, gi megde!* [Honor her, ye maidens!], says he.[338] And the best way to honor Mary is to lead a virginal life. Moreover, whoever plants in his or her heart the tree of humility next to the tree of chastity prepares a place of shade where Christ will gladly dwell. Thus it is that Christ is spiritually born in you, thanks to love, which is manifested in good works. But once born, he must also be nurtured. He is to be fed with spiritual food: give him on the one hand the breast of compassion and on the other that of spiritual joy. Incidentally, youths and novice do not yet possess these breasts, for Solomon says:

[337] The Vulgate has a somewhat different reading: *Descendi ad hortum nucum ut viderem poma convallis*.

[338] Kern 1895, 634:23.

Soror nostra parvula est et ubera non habet ['Our sister is little, and hath no breasts.'; Song of Songs 8:8].

It is especially the concluding portion of Ls. 46, in which its listeners are addressed as *megde* [maidens], that strongly suggests this sermon was written for a circle of female religious. Virginity, a typically female virtue during the Middle Ages, is also the leitmotif in *Dets wie onse vrouwe een besloten boegart es*. The author exhibits moreover a predilection for citations from the Song of Songs which feature a *soror*. The perspective of Ls. 46 is remarkably feminine, even when we take into consideration that within the context of bridal mysticism this kind of imagery was not uncommon. The following passage likewise points in the same direction: *Weretlic lide sinse sculdech te lovene, gestelic lide sinse sculdech te loven, mar bovenal sinse de megde sculdech te lovene*. [Secular folk should praise her, religious folk should praise her, but above all maidens should praise her][339] Of the three categories of laity, clergy and virgins it is especially the latter that owes Mary, symbol of chastity, its praises. Ls. 46 must certainly have been written for this category. Nevertheless *Dets wie onse vrouwe een besloten boegart es* was incorporated into manuscript H. Apparently this text held sufficient relevance for brethren living the spiritual life, as well. But in the fifteenth-century transmission of Ls. 46 we find this *Limburg sermon* in exclusively female milieus. This was ultimately the intended audience for this sermon on Mary as the epitome of virginity.

> In his study of medieval garden imagery, Schmidtke also provides an overview of the transmission of Ls. 46, which, it should be noted, he refers to as the *Mndl. Vier-Baumgärten-Predigt* [Middle Dutch Four Orchards Sermon].[340] In addition to H, he mentions the corpus manuscripts Am, ff. 23r–28v en Br1, ff. 148v–152v. Our text also appears in ms. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 11.146–48 (15th century, canonesses regular, Jericho in Brussels; also contains Ls. 7), ff. 8v–13v, *Een scoen sermon van onser liever vrouwen hoe datmense ghelijct bi eenen beslotenen boemgaert* [A fine sermon concerning how Our Lady is like an enclosed orchard] and in ms. Leeuwarden, Provinsjale en Buma-Bibliotheek, 685 Hs. (ca. 1450; Dominicans, Maria Magdalena, Wijk bij Duurstede; also contains Ls. 39), ff. 119v–125r, *Wie onse vrouwe een besloten boegaert es*.[341] Ms. Wiesbaden,

[339] Kern 1895, 634:11–13.
[340] Schmidtke 1982, 70 (A2).
[341] On the Brussels ms. see Stooker & Verbeij 1997, vol. 2, nr. 221; on the Leeuwarden ms. see § 2.5.

Hessisches Staatsarchiv, 3004 B 10, ff. 134vb–135vb bears an almost idendical incipit, but contains a different text.[342]

The existence of two manuscripts containing Ls. 46 that do not belong to the corpus transmission could suggest that this sermon has an additional route of transmission. But both manuscripts contain yet another *Limburg sermon* and in the Jericho manuscript this is even a translated *Sankt Georgener Predigt*. This means that *Dets wie onse vrouwe een besloten boegart es* has been transmitted exclusively in the context of the *Limburg sermons*. With a transmission of five manuscripts, Ls. 46—in all likelihood an original Middle Dutch sermon—achieved a relatively widespread dissemination.

2.13 Laudate dominum in sanctis eius *(Ls. 48)*

The forty-seventh text in the collection is the translation of Rd. 36, the sermon with which the *St. Georgen sermons* cycle begins, but which was not considered suitable for that role by the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* (see § 2.2). Rd. 36 now brings up the rear of the Middle Dutch compilation, but does not function as the proverbial tailender. Apparently another text was available that could function better as a conclusion.

The theme of this final sermon, *Laudate dominum in sanctis eius*, [Praise ye the Lord in his holy places] is the first line of the one hundred and fiftieth and final psalm, in other words, a biblical text. But the Psalms also provide the most important textual material of the Divine Office. Psalm 150 is one of the psalms that was always sung during lauds.[343] The author of Ls. 48 does not indicate whether he is referring to the biblical text or the office for lauds. He does, however, draw attention to the anything but coincidental fact that the psalter of David concludes with a song of praise. The title of Psalm 150 is revealing: *Alleluya, dats in Latin 'Laudate universalem' ende in Ditschen 'Loft dengenen di al begript', dats*

[342] On the ms. see Deschamps 1972, nr. 88 (pp. 243–246); on p. 245 Deschamps states erroneously that the text on ff. 134vb–135vb was borrowed from the *Limburg sermons*. Initially the text does seem to run more or less parallel with Ls. 46, but there follows a disquisition on the four principal points concerning humility that does not appear in this Ls. On this ms. see also Wackers 2002, who lists its contents at pp. 41–42, where the issue discussed here is not pursued.

[343] Cf. Harper 1993, 97–98.

Gode. [Alleluya, that is in Latin *Laudate universalem* and in Dutch 'Praise the one who comprehends all things, that is, God.][344] This psalm speaks of nothing other than praise and spiritual joy. And as such, according to this author, it functions as an antiphon to the book of Psalms: *Hin es nit allene selme, mar his als ene antyphane die mer sinct na den selmen* [It is not merely a psalm, but it is more like an antiphon that is sung after the psalms].[345] Given the fact that there is no known medieval antiphon entitled *Laudate dominum in sanctis eius*, I assume that the author is here referring to the liturgical function of Psalm 150.[346]

In this sermon a game is being played with liturgical texts and concepts, and it is one that could have meaning only for those who entered the choir each day to perform the Divine Office. The complex introduction to Ls. 48 is, then, emphatically intended for cognici. They will perhaps also have understood that this final *Limburg sermon* was designed to function as an antiphon, as it were, to the entire sermon collection. This, at least, seems to be the most likely explanation for the placement of the sermon at the end of the cycle, following the translation of Rd. 36.[347] The *Limburg sermons* cycle, then, was not only provided with a meaningful opening sermon, but also an appropriate concluding one. This is yet another indication of the careful manner in which the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* assembled his compilation.

The author of Ls. 48 first poses the rhetorical question as to the nature of the tone or note of the 'antiphon' to his theme, whereupon he himself provides the answer: the seventh and highest. Psalm 150 consists of seven clauses, says our author—but precisely how he wishes to divide this text consisting of six verses and multiple syntactical units, he does not say. Each of these clauses has seven notes, and together they form an ascending series, just like the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost described by Josiah. In Middle Dutch they are: *geest van wisheide ende van verstendenisse, geest van rade ende van starcheide, geest van wetentheide ende van genedecheide ende geest van vresen ons heren* [the spirit of wisdom and comprehension, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of understanding and mercy and the spirit of fear of our Lord].[348] The

[344] Kern 1895, 642:12–14.
[345] Kern 1895, 642:18–19.
[346] Such an antiphon is not found in Hesbert 1963–1979, and none of the liturgical experts I have consulted are familiar with it; with thanks to Ike de Loos (Utrecht).
[347] I am grateful to Thom Mertens (Antwerp) for this suggestion.
[348] Kern 1895, 643:4–7.

author next adopts the rather ambitious plan of linking the seven notes of Psalm 150 to the seven gifts of the spirit, a task for which a fairly sophisticated level of theological knowledge was required.

But first he presents an exposé on the Psalms in general. David starts the bidding high in the very first verse: *Beatus vir qui non abiit et cetera. Selech es der man di nit en ginc en den raet der quader ende nit en stunt in den wech der sonderen noch en sat in den setel van plagen.* [Blessed is the man who has not gone in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence.][349] The psalmist refers here especially, according to the author, to the three cardinal sins of *glotheit* [gluttony], *luxurie* [lust] and *hoeverde* [pride]. It is indeed difficult to avoid these sins in practice. But David reaches even higher in the final verse, in which he exhorts us to praise God through his saints. For there are few people able to avoid sin and who are moreover possessed of a desire to perform good works. And yet one must do none other than strive to exercise virtue, as long as he is incapable of climbing higher. This is already difficult enough in itself. How may the evil at heart, who with their hoarse voices cannot even reach the first note, ever achieve the seventh?

Next follows the core (corpus) of the sermon, in which the seven notes and the seven gifts of the spirit are linked with one another. The first note of the hymn of Psalm 150 is characterized by the spirit of wisdom (*spiritus sapientiae*), for those who praise God, possess true wisdom. The author cites at this point a number of biblical passages in which the concept of wisdom appear and then applies them to the first note. The final citation, concerning the *sapiens mulier* in Proverbs 14:1, is associated with Mary, who naturally also possessed the spirit of wisdom. In this way a segue is effected to the second note, which is comprised of Mary's body, or in other words the firmament. This image is derived from the second phrase of Psalm 150:1—*Laudate eum in firmamento virtutis eius* ('Praise ye him in the firmament of his power')—or the second clause, though which is not explicitly stated.

The text breaks off rather abruptly during the description of the second note, at the end of a gathering. The catch word *ven gin* appearing at the bottom of the page and the splendid intial L with which this text opens (fig. 15), reveal; that manuscript H must originally have had a complete version of Ls. 48 (see § 2.1). Why the makers of this

[349] Kern 1895, 643:8–11.

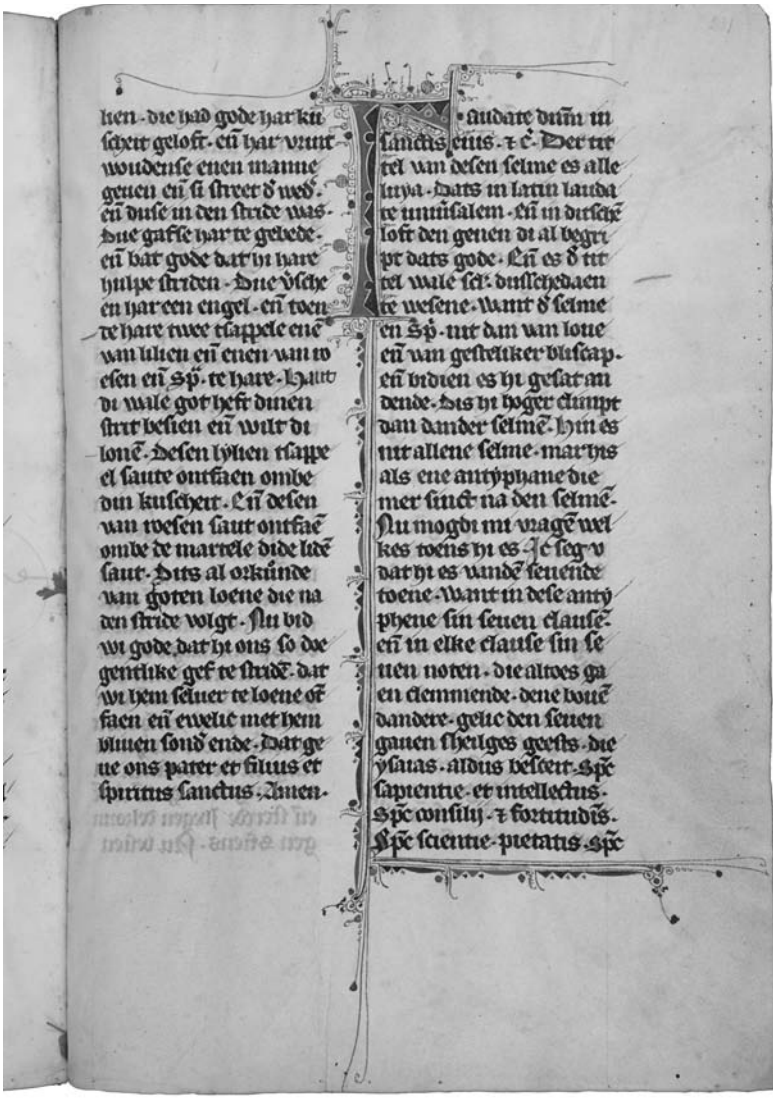

Fig. 15. MS The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 70 E 5, f. 231r. The opening of Ls. 48, with a reversed initial L.

manuscript did not include this text in the table of contents will probably always remain a mystery. Was the final gathering containing the rest of the text lost before the table of contents was drawn up? Whatever the case, it is most unfortunate, for to this day exists no other witness to this clever allegory of the seven musical notes has turned up in all of Middle Dutch literature.

The possibility that there may have existed a Latin model for this interpolated *Limburg sermon* is a good one, for there are numerous sermons with musical themes. We know, for example, that the great preacher Guiard of Laon liked to make musical allusions, both to the French chansons of his day as well as to the Latin hymns of the liturgy. In a few instances Guiard also incorporated musical allegories into his sermons, but as far as I can tell none of these could have provided a model for Ls. 48.[350] The Latin tradition does include other texts, however, which in terms of structure are reminiscent of *Laudate dominum in sanctis eius*. In his manual for preaching, *Formae predicandi*, that presumably was composed at the beginning of the fourteenth century, Robert of Basevorn provides an interesting example.[351] For mnemonic purposes he divides the sermon theme *Ego vox clamantis in deserto parate viam Domini* (Mark 1:3) into six parts and links each one to the six musical notes ut-re-mi-fa-sol-la.[352] But even if Ls. 48 proved to be a translation, it would still be the first Middle Dutch text in which a musical allegory is developed.[353]

As long as no source has been identified, we will assume a Middle Dutch origin for *Laudate dominum in sanctis eius* as well. In its current, shortened manifestation, the text contains a single characteristic that is typical of the *Limburg sermons*. In the characterization of the angry in heart, who cannot reach even the first note, we read:

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[350] Cf. Boeren 1956, 170–172 for Guiard and his allusions to religious and secular musical practice; an overview of his musical allegories appears on p. 173. The most appealing example in this context is perhaps Boeren's sermon nr. 24, on *Ascendit deus in jubilo* (Boeren 1956, 263; cf. p. 171) into which the section *de IV melodiis caritatis* has been incorporated. This sermon is nr. 136 in Schneyer 1969–1990, vol. 2 (p. 262).

[351] On Robert of Basevorn and his *Formae predicandi*, see Briscoe 1992, 36–42.

[352] Cf. Carruthers 1990, 104–107.

[353] Musical imagery is used in a more or less comparable way in the *Boec der minnen*, but more in passing. See for example…*ende an dezer trappen of an dezer ladderen willen wi volghen den heylighen sanghe der heyligher minnen. ende vesten unze word mit zinen orcunde. Want ic weet waerlike dat de rechte grade zijn an den zanghe.* (Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 26,34–27,2).

> Wie souden de nidege metten verrotden herten wale gesengen, die nit wale en connen gevulen ende verkeert sin, ende altoes murmuren, bi dien dasse de borst hebben al vol verrotheide?
>
> [How can the spiteful with their rotten hearts ever sing well, those who are not capable of feeling and are evil, and who are always murmuring because their bosom is so full of rottenness?][354]

This description is strongly reminiscent of one of the Middle Dutch interpolations in Ls. 31, where we read of *die gene metten nidegen ende met den verrotden herten* [men with spiteful and rotten hearts].[355] The addition *ende met den verrotden* appears nowhere else in the corpus transmission of the *Limburg sermons* and may presumably have been added by the scribe of H.[356] Should Ls. 48 prove to have been translated from a Latin original, then we have at any rate in this case an example of poetic license in the tradition of the *Limburg sermons*.

2.14 *The* Maastricht Passion play

Presumably a couple of decades after the corpus of *Limburg sermons* in manuscript H was completed, the owner of the manuscript at the time decided to add a drama text to the codex. This work, now known as the *Maastrichtse (Ripuarische) passiespel* [Maastricht (Ripuarian) Passion Play], comprises folios 233–247.[357] Whether the person who added the play was the same unknown comissioner of manuscript H remains the question. Inscriptions added later indicate that the manuscript resided somewhat further to the east than when the *Limburg sermons* were written (see § 1.1). Nevertheless, the owner at the time seems ca. 1330 to have possessed a portion of parchment that was very similar to what the *Limburg sermons* had been written on. The scribe of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* first used a number of pages that had been pricked in exactly

[354] Kern 1895, 644:23–26.

[355] Kern 1895, 459:5–6. This interpolation is printed and analyzed in its entirety in Scheepsma 2001b, 166; portions of which are cited in § 2.3 and 4.3.

[356] Cf. Scheepsma 2001b, 166, n. 56 and also § 2.3.

[357] Ed. Zacher 1842a and Moltzer 1875, 496–538; the Germanists Carla Dauven-van Knippenberg and Arend Quak (Amsterdam) are currently preparing a new edition. For a brief treatment of the the *Maastrichtse passiespel*, see Bergmann 1985b, Bergmann 1986, no. 66 (pp. 144–146) and Tervooren 2006, 224–226; see further Bergmann 1972, *passim*, Dauven-van Knippenberg 2001, Dauven-van Knippenberg 2003 and Dauven-van Knippenberg 2006.

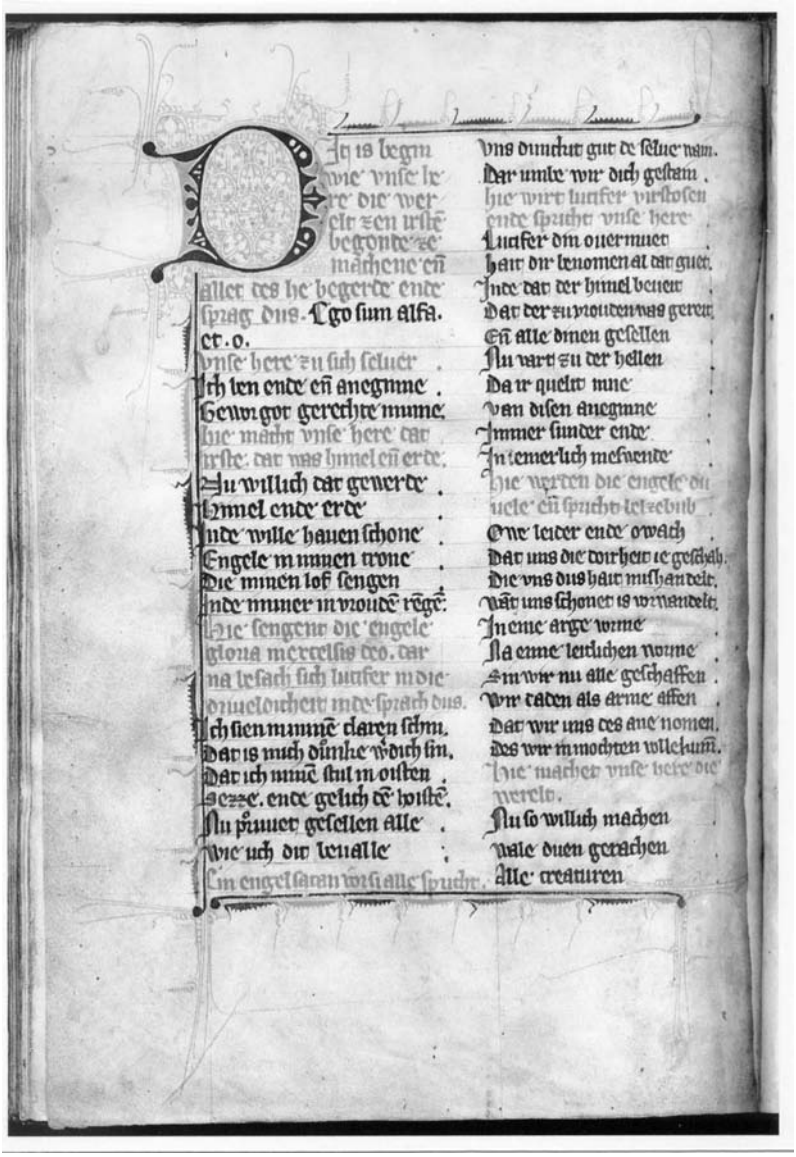

Fig. 16. MS The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 70 E 5, f. 233v. Opening page of the *Maastrichtse passiespel*; the cue headings are written in red in the manuscript.

the same way as those containing the *Limburg sermons*, but which had not yet been lined. This was now done in ink, whereas the pages containing the *Limburg sermons* had been lined in lead pencil. Once the pre-prepared parchment had been exhausted, the scribe of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* continued his work on material lined in his own fashion, though he did maintain the double-column format and a total of 31 lines per column of the *Limburg sermons*.[358]

Though it was previously thought that the *Maastrichtse passiespel* existed entirely independently of the *Limburg sermons* and was added only much later to manuscript H, the situation just outlined demonstrates that there exists at the very least a certain connection between the two texts.[359] The similarity in formatting between the *Limburg sermons* and the *Maastrichtse passiespel* is not in itself sufficiently convincing, for this could easily have been emulated. But the use of parchment pricked in exactly the same fashion can hardly have been a coincidence. I shall now attempt to demonstrate that there is a certain connection between the form and contents of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* and the *Limburg sermons*.

The *Maastrichtse passiespel* bears the rubric, *Dit is begin, wie unse here die werelt zen irsten begonde ze machene ende allet des he begerde, ende sprag dus: 'Ego sum alfa et omega'*. [Here begins (the story of) how our Lord first began to create the world and all things according to His will, and spoke thus: 'Ego sum alfa et omega'].[360] The *D* is an initial six lines high, skilfully executed. (fig. 16).[361] The text itself consists of alternating brief commentaries on the action, written in red (cue headings), and longer pieces of text in which the characters in the play deliver their lines in rhymed couplets (cues). By way of example there follows below the scene of the annunciation from the Christmas story (Cue headings appearing in the manuscript in red are here rendered in italics):

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[358] On the codicology and dating of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* see Gumbert 1987, 169.

[359] Cf. Deschamps 1972, 258, believes that the *Maastrichtse passiespel* was bound into the codex at a later date.

[360] Moltzer 1875, 497 (cf. Zacher 1842a, 303). All quotations from the *Maastrichtse passiespel* are taken from Moltzer's most recent edition, which is an improvement over Zacher (cf. p. XXXIII). With the help of the preliminary transcript provided me by Carla Dauven-van Knippenberg and Arend Quak, I have made a number of small changes with respect to Moltzer.

[361] On the penwork of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* see § 1.1.

Hie sent unse here Gabriele zu Marie zen irsten male.	*Here our Lord sent Gabriel to Mary for the first time.*
Gabriel, virnem mig reithe	Gabriel, hearken well to what I say:
Van Davides geslete	of David's kin
Han ich ein muder erkoren	I have chosen a mother,
Manich zijt hie bevoren	a long time ago,
Di mich maget sal gebaren	who will bear me as a virgin
Dat sal der helich geist bewaren	this will be preserved by the Holy Spirit
Ende na geburde sal maget bliven	and remain a virgin after giving birth
Reine vor allen wiven.	pure before all women.
Maria is si genant	Mary is her name,
Zu Galileen in dat lant	In the land of Galilee,
In die stat van Nazaret	in the city of Nazareth
Da vindis du si in ore gebet.	you will find her at her prayers
Gabriel spricht zu Marien	*Gabriel speaks to Mary*
(Ne timeas Maria etc.)	(Ne timeas Maria etc.)
Maria, wie gebers du so?	Mary, why do you tremble so?
Halt dig, reine maget, vro	Rejoice, blessed virgin,
Du hais vonden genade	for you have found grace
Van den himelichen gode.	from the heavenly God.
Maria antwort den engele	*Mary answers the angel*
(Quomodo fiet istud, etc.)	(Quomodo fiet istud, etc.)
Engel van himelriche	Oh, angel of heaven
Id dunckit mich wunderliche	it seems to me a wonder
Dat it immer me geschie	that this should happen to me
Want ich man bekande nie.	for I have known no man
Gabriel zu Marien spricht	*Gabriel speaks to Mary*
(Audi Maria virgo spc. scs. etc.)[362]	(Audi Maria virgo spc. scs. etc.)
Maria, maget reine,	Mary, blessed virgin,
In haf vorte engeine	I have no fear
Dat kent dat du salt gebaren	The child that you shall carry
Dat sal der heligeit bewaren.	will preserve holiness.
Maria zen engele spricht	*Mary replies to the angel*
(Ecce, ancilla domini etc.)	(Ecce, ancilla domini etc.)
Such, die godis dirne ben ich	Behold, I am God's handmaiden,

[362] Both Zacher 1842a, 311 and Moltzer 1875, 503 leave the abbreviation *spc scs* unresolved.

Heilich engel, inde an mich	oh holy angel, and in me
Volge die susze bottschaf din	fulfill your sweet message,
Want der vrouwet sich die sele min.[363]	for therein rejoices my soul.

A large number of biblical and apocryphal scenes is presented in a similarly lively and expressive fashion. In some cases, as this passage demonstrates, the biblical text is called to mind with the help of a few Latin tags.

The *Maastrichtse passiespel* comprises in brief the entire span of Christian salvation history, from the creation of the world and the Fall, to the salvation of mankind by the advent of Jesus Christ. This, at least, is what we assume, for the text breaks off abruptly in manuscript H at the betrayal of Judas (on a now loose leaf, f. 247). Because similar passion plays narrate all of salvation history, the same is likely to hold true in this case. The *Maastrichtse passiespel* has, however, incurred further damage. Several pages are missing at the beginning of the text, where the scribe used the pre-prepared parchment.[364] The text of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* has come down to us, then, in a heavily battered state.

When Julius Zacher discovered the *Maastrichtse passiespel* in 1842, he described it as an 'Osterspiel' [Easter play], but according to modern classification the text belongs to the genre of the medieval passion play.[365] The contents of texts considered to belong to the Easter play genre are typically more closely associated with Easter and their performance would have taken place within the context of the Easter liturgy. The passion play genre comprises a wider range of dramatic texts in which the salvation of mankind from original sin accomplished through the suffering and death of Christ is the main subject. The *Maastrichtse passiespel* belongs undeniably in this latter category. It is important in this case to keep this distinction in mind, for there also exists a *Maastrichts paasspel* [Maastricht Easter Play]. This Latin passion play dated to ca. 1200, is one of the oldest from the German and Dutch-speaking region.[366]

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[363] Moltzer 1875, 503:242–504:269 (cf. Zacher 1842a, 310:242–311:268).

[364] Cf. Gumbert 1987, 169 and Appendix I.

[365] Zacher 1842a, 302. On the distinction between Easter play and passion play, see Dauven-Van Knippenberg 2001, 70–71; the standard text on the passion play is Bergmann 1972, while Bergmann 1986 treats the medieval German-language dramatic texts, to which the *Maastrichtse passiespel* is reckoned.

[366] The *Maastrichts paasspel* [Easter play] is preserved in a number of parchment leaves that served as endpapers in ms. The Hague, KB, 76 F 3, ff. 14r + 1r, which dates to the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century. The ms. came from the Onze Lieve Vrouwekapittel [The Chapter of the Virgin Mary] in

Thanks to the redating of manuscript H, the *Maastrichtse passiespel* may now lay claim to being the oldest surviving example of Middle Dutch drama. Even within the rich tradition of German passion plays, with which it is closely associated—Germanic studies consider the *Maastrichtse passiespel* a part of its domain—it is among the oldest specimens. Due in large part to the Lower Rhine or Ripuarian dialect in which the play is written, the *Maastrichtse passiespel* has been the red-haired stepchild of literary history. For many years both Germanic and Netherlandic studies have given it short shrift because it was not composed in one of the core areas of either German or Dutch literature. Now that on the one hand the nationalistic approach has slacked off a bit, and on the other hand the individuality of literary developments in the Rhine-Meuse area have been foregrounded, the *Maastrichtse passiespel* has received a more clearly defined place in literary history.[367]

The language of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* has already been localized by Philipp Hamacher to in or around Aachen, i.e. to the north Ripuarian area.[368] All subsequent scholars have accepted this localization. And yet the many diverse Middle Dutch linguistic forms continue to command the attention of scholars. Arend Quak detected a further reason to situate the play in the immediate vicinity of Aachen. Geographically speaking, the city lies very close to the Dutch-speaking area and it maintained literary relations with it, as well. In this context Quak notes the visit to Aachen by the Dutch minstrel Augustijnken in 1370 and the performance there of a Middle Dutch Lancelot play in 1412.[369] Quak did not, however, take into consideration the earlier dating of the *Maastrichtse passiespel*. We must look for older indications of literary interactions between Middle Dutch and Ripuarian. The translation of the Ripuarian *Buch der Minne* into Middle Dutch, before 1300 (see § 1.4), constitutes just such an indication.[370]

Maastricht. The text contains various elements characteristic of a passion play, such as the *visitatio sepulchri*, the *hortulanus* scene and the *peregrinus*-scene. For more on this text, see Linke 1985.

[367] An important impulse for the new position of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* is provided by Dauven-van Knippenberg 2001. On the status of the text in the Rhine-Meuse area see Tervooren 2006, 224–226.

[368] Hamacher 1922, 10–52.

[369] Quak 1995, 404; cf. Beckers 1989, 42 for the exchanges between MDu. and Ripuarian in the area of drama.

[370] The close linguistic affinities between the MDu. and Ripuarian language areas is furthermore demonstrated, for example, by the *broedere der dirde regule Sint Franciscus binnen Aachen op Harduwijns grave*, which contained a Middle Dutch (Brabantine with Westlimburg influence) lectionary, in which the epistles were also included. The manu-

The greatest number of Dutch-isms in the *Maastrichtse passiespel* are to be found in the scene in which the sinner Mary Magdalene turns to Christ. She figures here as the sister of Martha and Lazarus of Bethany, a legendary fact that took root early on in Middle Dutch literature, given the existence of the thirteenth-century *Luikse Leven van Jezus* [Liège Life of Jesus].[371] The language and behavior of Mary Magdalene are that of a frivolous lady familiar with the etiquette and manners of the courtly *minne* tradition. This damsel is also given a song that has been identified as a *virelai*, an originally French genre, the oldest Middle Dutch example of which has been attributed to Jan I of Brabant (†1293).[372] It is precisely the language of this song that seems so 'Dutch.' In this way, the author of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* appears to have wanted to allude to the most dominant court in the region at the time, namely that of Brabant, where, moreover, virelai ballads were composed. This linguistic play with the differences between the Ripuarian and Brabantine dialects is in itself an indication that there was a literary link between the Lower Rhine region and Brabant.

Alone among the early 'German' passion plays, all of which appear to stand alone in the transmitted corpus, the *Kreuzensteiner Passionsspielfragmente* constitutes a clear counterpart to the *Maastrichtse passiespel*. These dramatic fragments are dated to around the fourteenth century.[373] The bits of this play that remain resemble the *Maastrichtse passiespel* so strongly that the latter almost has to be the former's source. Only the opening line of the *Kreuzensteiner Passionsspielfragmente* refers to the virelai ballad of Mary Magdalene, but even here in this typically courtly scene one encounters a remarkable number of Dutchisms. The dialect of the *Kreuzensteiner Passionsspielfragmente* points to the north of the Ripuarian linguistic region, as does that of the *Maastrichste passiespel*. In the area around Aachen in the middle of the fourteenth century, then, there existed a small tradition of passion play composition.[374]

For some time now, scholars in Germanic studies have hotly debated whether dramatic texts preserved in manuscripts, like the *Maastrichtse*

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script is London, British Library, Ms. Egerton, 2188, created in 1353; on this ms. see Biemans 1984, nr. 24 (pp. 39–41) and Scheepsma 2008, 23–27.

[371] De Bruin 1970a, 194:24–27 (cf. 200:28–31); cf. Quak 1995, 399.

[372] For the literary historical status of this poem, see Willaert 1995; on the linguistic background, see especially Quak 1995.

[373] Ed. Dörr 1919; see further Bergmann 1986, nr. 76 (pp. 181–183).

[374] For the relationship between the *Maastrichtse passiespel* and the *Kreuzensteiner Passionsspielfragmente* see Bergmann 1972, *passim*, Quak 1995, *passim* and Willaert 1995, 549–551.

passiespel, should be regarded as performance texts or reading texts. Traditionally it was assumed that texts such as this one, which were formatted clause for clause and contained something resembling stage directions, were directly connected with actual performances. In his edition of the play *Sündenfall und Erlösung* [Fall and Salvation], Werner Williams-Krapp put the cat among the pidgeons by stating that far too little attention had been paid to the transmission context of dramatic texts.[375] The manuscript containing the *Sündenfall und Erlösung*, along with numerous other medieval dramatic codices, contained in his view not performance texts (with or without stage directions), but rather 'Erbauungsliteratur' in dramatic form. Once committed to writing, dramatic texts easily lend themselves to be used as reading texts, and the way these manuscripts are formatted indicates that this was usually the case. Williams-Krapp points to the sermon collection as an analogous kind of text.[376] Sermon manuscripts can be used by a priest or some other preacher as a manual for preaching, but once written down, sermons prove to be excellent reading material. Certain idiosyncrasies tend to disappear in the final stage of transmission that serve no purpose for the passive reader, but without losing features typical of a sermon, such as direct address of the audience.[377] According to Williams-Krapp, the *Maastrichtse passiespel* is not a performance text, but a reading text, an opinion which, despite the fuss his initial announcement caused, has gradually garnered support.[378]

In the course of his argument, Williams-Krapp does not so much as mention the fact that the *Maastrichtse passiespel* has been transmitted in a very specific sermon context. He places particular emphasis on the fact that many of the cue headings are in the past tense, which is unusual for real stage directions, and moreover renders them dysfunctional. But what do these cue headings really mean? The Rhine-Frankish inscrip-

[375] Williams-Krapp 1980, later strongly contested in, among others, Bergmann 1985a and Linke 1988.

[376] Cf. Dauven-van Knippenberg 1994, for the relationship between sermon and religious drama.

[377] Williams-Krapp 1980, 11.

[378] Williams-Krapp 1980, 29 n. 34. Williams-Krapps most important critics, Bergmann and Linke, ultimately agree with his opinion that the play in manuscript H is not a performance text. Bergmann 1986, 146 now categorizes the *Maastrichtse passiespel* as a reading text (whereas in in Bergmann 1985b it was still considered a performance text). Linke 1988, 540–541 argues that dramatic texts with a two-column format (as is the case with H) can only rarely be linked to actual performance. The debate about the possible performative nature of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* is taken up again in Dauven-van Knippenberg (in press).

tions added later to the twelfth-century *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* (see § 1.4), in some cases strongly resemble the cue headings in the *Maastrichtse passiespel*. Like the play, the *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* also provides an overview of Christian salvation history, but in this instance in the form of full-page miniatures with brief captions. I provide below three examples (whereby in the *Maastrichtse passiespel* the interjacent clauses have been deleted, along with portions of the headings):

> Hie deit der engel den hirden kunt dat Jesus geboren si. (*Maastrichtse passiespel*)
> [Here the angel announces to the shepherds that Jesus has been born]
> Hi kundet der engel den hirten daz unser herro geborin ist. (*Hildegard-Gebetbuch*)
> [Here the angel announces to the shepherds that our Lord has been born]
>
> Hie was Jhesus zwelf jare alt. […]
> Hi ginc Jhesus in den tempel under die Juden ende sprach. (*Maastrichtse passiespel*)
> [Here was Jesus twelve years old]
> [Here Jesus went into the temple amongst the Jews and spoke]
> Hi disputirit unser herro in demo templo mit den Juden do zewlf ierich waz. (*Hildegard-Gebetbuch*)
> [Here our Lord argues in the temple with the Jews when he was twelve years old]
>
> Hie <kumet> unse here wider ende vint sine jungere slafende ende sprach.
> Hie geit uns here anderwerf beden
> Hie kumet unse here ende vindet sin jungere slafende ende geit sich dirdewerf beden up den berg.
> [Here our Lord returns and finds his disciples sleeping and spoke]
> [Here our Lord once again goes to pray]
> [Here comes our Lord and finds his disciples sleeping and goes for a third time to pray upon the mountain]
> Hie kumet Gabriel ende troistet unsen here (*Maastrichtse passiespel*)
> [Here Gabriel comes to console our Lord]
> Hi ginc unser herro uffe den berc beden unde quam unsers herren engel unde sterkethed in an der marthel. (*Hildegard-Gebetbuch*)[379]
> [Here our Lord went up the mountain and Our Lord's angel came and strengthened him in his martyrship.]

[379] Moltzer 1875, 505 (cf. Zacher 1842a, 312; the cue headings are not included in the line numbering of either edition) and Schneider 1987b, 58 (14v); Moltzer 1875, 543 (cf. Zacher 1842a, 320) and Schneider 1987b, 58 (19r); Moltzer 1875, 536–537 (cf. Zacher 1842a, 347–348) and Schneider 1987b, 60 (53v).

The striking similarities in the first example may well be due to the necessity of describing the same biblical situation in a single sentence, which does not leave much room for variation. The other examples demonstrate that both the *Maastrichste passiespel* and the *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* used formulaic 'captions' to invoke familiar scenes from salvation history—which might explain the use of the past tense—but that the way in which this was accomplished differed greatly. Additionally, it should be noted that these two texts make divergent choices in their selection of biblical events: the conversion of Mary Magdalene, to which the *Maastrichtse passiespel* devotes so much space, receives just one miniature with caption in the *Hildegard-Gebetbuch*. On the other hand, the play makes hardly any room for the miracles performed by Jesus, whereas several openings are devoted to them in the prayerbook.[380]

The similarities between the cue headings in the *Maastrichtse passiespel* and the captions, in Latin and Rhine-Frankish, in the *Hildegard-Gebetbuch*, can be explained by their more or less comparable functions. From about the middle of the twelfth century aids were developed to help relatively unlettered religious to mobilize their spiritual powers in order to deepen their lives of personal prayer. The *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* (composed ca. 1190) is just such an aid: originally each opening in this manuscript had on the right-hand side a miniature with a scene from salvation history and on the left an inscription in Latin. The first part of the *Rothschild Canticles* manuscript, produced in the southern Netherlands ca. 1300, exhibits a similar format (see § 2.3). In the *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* a number of Latin captions were replaced by vernacular ones, presumably because the users at the time could not make sense of the Latin. Then there were Middle High German captions that were supposed to invoke the biblical events. The 'cue headings' in the *Maastrichste passiespel* serve more or less the same purpose: these directions for the dramatic action, written in red ink, are designed to remind the audience of familiar scenes from the life of Jesus. Rather than illustrating these scenes iconographically, they are 'acted out' in the form of a monologue or a dialogue. An actual performance was not necessary: the *Maastrichtse passiespel* could also have been read aloud in refectory, or possibly in private study.[381] But the possibility that meditation on salvation history

[380] For the similarities with the *Hildegard-Gebetbuch* cf. also Dauven-Van Knippenberg 2001, 74.

[381] In this context we would refer the reader to the dramatic works written by the abbess Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim (born ca. 935) for her fellow nuns. Her plays were

could have followed an actual performance of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* may not, of course, be discounted.[382]

The addition of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* to manuscript H is on balance not without significance for any study of the *Limburg sermons*. The two-column format of the *Maastrichtse passiespel*, unusual for a dramatic text, is clearly in keeping with the *Limburg sermons*. This raises at the very least the possibility that both texts had more or less the same function. From the perspective of performance, the difference between a sermon and a dramatic text is not that great. A sermon is, it is true, a monologue in which only the preacher speaks, but we are dealing here with an essentially performative genre. The *Limburg sermons* exhibit many features that suggest a performance context, even in cases where they may originally have been not sermons, but letters or tracts. It needs no further argument that the dialogue about Lord Selfart virtually cries out, as it were, for an oral performance. And as a dramatic text, the *Maastrichtse passiespel* itself exhibits an obvious dramatic tendency, which is at most only somewhat diluted by the format in which it appears in manuscript H. Read aloud by an accomplished performer, this play, with its multiple roles, must have made outstanding depiction of salvation history, in a form that was moreover easy to grasp. In a sense, the gap separating the monologues of the *Limburg sermons* from the *Maastrichtse passiespel* is filled by *Dets dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen*, in which there are in fact two roles to fill, both of which a skillful performer could easily perform himself.

2.15 *Preliminary Review*

The *Limburg sermons* collection that has become familiar to us from manuscript H was tightly designed. The unknown compiler treated the *St. Georgen sermons*, which formed the core of his prose corpus, in a fairly idiosyncratic way. Chief among his concerns was the design and formatting of the texts, for he rarely tampered with their contents. It is true that in numerous places the Middle High German sermons were cast in more general terms, and their argument streamlined wherever

designedfor reading and intended to counter the pagan works of Terence by defending monastic virtues (chastity!) (see Rädle 1983).

[382] Dauven-van Knippenberg 1998 has a similar function in mind for the *Wienhäuser Osterspielfragment*.

possible. The compiler of the *Limburg sermons* was remarkably frugal with his source material: by means of skillfull rearranging and compiling, he was able to incorporate all of the *St. Georgen sermons* that he had in his 'Vorlage' into his Middle Dutch corpus. Moreover, he ensured that the resulting collection conformed well to the formal conventions of the written sermon.

To what extent the sixteen interpolated sermons were adapted to fit the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*'s needs in terms of contents and form will probably always remain a mystery. We simply do not know what the originals looked like. It is possible that no fewer than fifteen of these texts have a Dutch background, but we must tread carefully here. There are indications in some texts that would point to a possible origin in the German-speaking regions: the seven passion sermons (Ls. 32–38) have an early Middle Frankish transmission history, and in Ls. 42 and Ls. 45 we encounter eastern terms that are difficult to account for. But for the time being a Middle High German origin is a certainty only for *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regele.* Because the transmission of *Herr Selbharts Regel* is fairly closely linked to that of the *St. Georgen sermons*, it is reasonable to assume that these texts reached the Netherlands at the same time as the Middle High German sermons. The translation of Ls. 44 was in all likelihood also the work of the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*. In one instance we were able to determine that the Middle Dutch text is a translation from the Latin, namely Ls. 40; furthermore, Ls. 41 especially exhibits affinities with Latinitas. Whether the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* was the translator in this case as well is uncertain. The possibility may certainly not be discounted that more of the interpolated *Limburg sermons* have a Latin source. Should the compiler ultimately prove to have authored Middle Dutch prose, which again cannot be discounted, then his input will have been fairly limited. Without doubt his most important contributions lay in the areas of compilation, translation, and adaptation.

The compiler of the *Limburg sermons* made ample use of compilation techniques. The three texts forged from two shorter *St. Georgen sermons* have been discussed in detail (§ 2.2). But several of the interpolated texts, as well, are compilations of prose material from diverse sources. The first half of Ls. 39 consists of an adapted letter, which has closest affinities to the *Boengaert van der geesteleker herten*. The second half of this text describes the encounter in the bed of love, and employs courtly terminology; no analogues have been found for this portion of the text. In Ls. 41, too, the application of compilation techniques is readily

apparent: the first part comprises a lucid summary of the nine forms of love according to Bernard of Claivaux's *De diligendo deo*, the middle part is a series of seven hell-torments which probably has it roots in popular tradition, and the conclusion is a Middle Dutch paraphrase of the *Explicatio in Cantica canticorum*. Ls. 42, too, at the very least raises the suspicion that a 'manner of love' has been added has been tacked on at the end in order to arrive at the significant number of seven. To what extent these Middle Dutch compilations may be attributed to the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* remains the question. It is clearly evident, however, from the transmission just how integral the process of compiling and adaptation was to the textual tradition of the *Limburg sermons*. This is also demonstrated by the Middle Frankish manuscript F, in which the seven passion sermons (Ls. 32–38) were combined to form a coherent whole, as well as the corpus manuscript Am, in which new texts were created from already existing *Limburg sermons*.

The interpolations made in *Dbuec van den palmboeme* (Ls. 31) and a few other *St. Georgen sermons* remain for the time being the most striking witnesses to the literary and spiritual views of the creator of our oldest Middle Dutch sermon collection. He reveals himself to us as someone who was alarmed by the low level of the religious life encountered in some monastic communities. It is frequently the false religious in one's own circle who cause all kinds of evil and in so doing poison the entire community. The compiler of the *Limburg sermons* probably knew these evils from his own experience. He evidently presented his sermon collection to a community that had high religious ambitions and did not wish to lapse into weakness. In all probability he held a leadership role in this community, presumably as priest or confessor. This passionate figure matches the well-known profile established by Herbert Grundmann for the creators of medieval vernacular literature: he was a religious possessed of a decided tendency toward reform who was prepared to share his theological knowledge with a group of inspired yet unschooled followers who were not well versed in Latin. If he did indeed write one or more of the *Limburg sermons*, then he would fit the profile even better.[383]

It is especially in the independent concluding passage of *Dbuec van den palmboeme* that the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* breaks a lance for people overwhelmed by mystical experiences (for more examples, see

[383] Cf. Grundmann 1977, 452–477 (here especially p. 457).

§ 4.1). He lashes out in a fierce tone against outsiders who disparage the peculiar physical symptoms that can sometimes accompany the divine experience. The experience of mystic love must have constituted the pivot of the religious community for which the *Limburg sermons* collection was compiled. Just one indication of this is the slight intervention in the order of the *St. Georgen sermons*, whereby the Middle Dutch corpus begins with a text which has as its theme bridal mysticism. But a particular interest in *minne* mysticism appears especially from the topics of the interpolated sermons. Two texts are entirely devoted to this topic, namely *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne* (Ls. 41) and *Det sin seven maniren van minnen* (Ls. 42)—by no coincidence the two tracts that may be attributed (at least in part) to the great Brabantine mystics Hadewijch and Beatrijs van Nazareth. Moreover, in a few other sermons such typically mystical themes as the spiritual wine cellar (Ls. 43) or the orchard of love (Ls. 39 and Ls. 46) are discussed and explicated in great detail.

The crucial interpolations in the palmtree treatise and a number of other *St. Georgen sermons* lead us as well to a stylistic idiosyncrasy of the *Limburg sermons*. In the Middle Dutch translation one observes a certain tendency to provide the argument with extra emphasis by means of exclamations, expletives and disguised oaths. To give just a single example from *Dbuec van den boegarde*: *Deus, die verwende sele die in derre groter joien was ende dus haestelike gewect wert ende in al so groet jamer weder valt! Sekerlic, dats wale tontfarmen*. [*Deus*, the blissful soul who had been in such joy and is thus so rudely awakened and falls again into such woe! Surely, it is to be pitied].[384] In the *Limburg sermons* there is a considerable number of sentences that begin with exclamations such as *Deus*, *Bi lode* [By Lo(y)], *Entrowen* [Indeed, Truly], *Ami* [Woe is me!] or *Ay* (*sekerlike*) [Ah (to be sure)] and others like these.

> The exclamation *Bi lode* is found exclusively in the long Middle Dutch interpolation at the end of Ls. 31.[385] The exclamation *Ay sekerlike* does not occur in the *St. Georgen sermons*, but we find it among other places precisely in the 'seam' or transition between Rd. 64 and Rd. 69 (which together constitute Ls. 21), and furthermore in a few of the interpolated sermons.[386] Sentences beginning with the exclamation *Deus* within an

[384] Kern 1895, 545:35–546:2.

[385] Kern 1895, 465:19 (cited in § 2.3) and 466:2 (cited in § 4.1); cf. Scheepsma 2001b, 168–169).

[386] For the passage from Ls. 21 cf. Kern 1895, 404:1; cited in § 2.2. the passage *Ay sekerlike, dats wale tontsinne enen igeliken mensche* (Kern 1895, 374:4) from Ls. 17, does not appear in the MHG version Rd. 58. The passages in Ls. 31 that begin with *Ay sekerlike* (457:7 and 462:7) have no parallels in Rd. 60 (cf. Scheepsma 2001b, 165 and

otherwise entirely Middle Dutch context appear almost exclusively in a few of the interpolated *Limburg sermons*, namely Ls. 39 (cited above), Ls. 40 and Ls. 43.[387] The same holds true for the less frequently attested exclamation *Ami*.[388]

It is not the case that these kinds of exclamations do not appear in the *St. Georgen sermons*. The numerous sentences in the translated *St. Georgen sermons* that begin with the word *Entrowen* have derived this truth reinforcing expression from the Middle High German *entriwwon* or *vntriwwon*.[389] But expressions like these, derived from colloquial language, appear with greater frequency and diversity in the Middle Dutch translation. Moreover, series of rhetorical questions and answers are more emphatically elaborated in the *Limburg sermons*, whereas the *St. Georgen sermons* delineate passages less clearly with 'Wechselrede'. Take for example the following passage from Rd. 58 in manuscript G: *Die sælde hain siv och daz siv nieman robit, wande siv niht hain, da uon nimet man och inen niht* [They are blessed also because no one robs them, for they have nothing, and therefore they cannot be robbed].[390] In Ls. 17 this sentence is transformed into a brief dialogue of question and answer: *Die selegheit hebben dese armen dasse niman en roeft. War ombe? Mar sin hebben niet! Dar ombe en nemt hen oec niman nit*. [These poor folk are blessed because no one robs them. Why? But they have nothing! Therefore no one can deprive them of anything.][391] By putting this same passage into direct speech and transforming it into questions and answers, the *Limburg sermons* acquires a higher degree of immediacy than its exemplar.

On closer inspection, the aforementioned phenomena occur most frequently in *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regele*, with Ls. 31 (and in particular

167). This expression also occurs in the passion sermons, namely in Ls. 35 (506:1 and 508:24) and Ls. 38 (534:23). In the remaining interpolated sermons we encounter *Ay sekerlike* in Ls. 39 (546:11), Ls. 41 (564:3 and 567:16–17), Ls. 43 (593:24), Ls. 44 (599:24), Ls. 45 (616:24) and Ls. 46 (632:27 and 633:31). An addition with respect to the MHG in Ls. 29 begins with the exclamation *Ay arme* (Kern 1895, 432:23–27); in what follows the exclamation *Ay gude Got* is used, which also does not occur in the source text (432:31).

[387] Ls. 39 (Kern 1895, 545:26 and 35); Ls. 40 (550:13—cited in § 2. 6; translated from Lat. *mirum est*; cf. Ampe 1957, 313:17)—and 554:31 (departs significantly from the Lat.; cf. Ampe 1957, 319); Ls. 43 (Kern 1895, 594:33). An exception is Ls. 20 (Kern 1895, 395:21), where a sentence begins with *Ay deus*; G, f. 98vb has instead *Owe*.

[388] The exclamation *Ami* occurs in Ls. 37 (518:12), Ls. 39 (542:13 and 546:9) and Ls. 44 (602:21).

[389] But there are exceptions. In Ls. 4 there is a passage (Kern 1895, 214:10–14) that does not appear in the source text Rd. 40; this one begins with *Entruwen*.

[390] G, f. 80va.

[391] Kern 1895, 368:14–16.

the Middle Dutch interpolations) running a close second. A couple of the exclamations cited above appear in Ls. 44, but direct speech is used even more prominently there. Numerous sentences begin, for example, with *jahi* or *jaeti* [yes he is, yes it is] (see § 2.10), compounds that are more at home in colloquial speech. Of course, the author does not use these words and expressions without purpose. He employs the genre of the didactic dialogue and in the process uses language that emulates an oral context. The oral elements that appear in both the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* are intended to create the impression of an oral narrative situation. That the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* used more of these effects may be linked to his efforts to give his texts the formal characteristics of a sermon. He is attempting to come as close as he can to an oral performance in the *Limburg sermons*, an understandable intention given their collective function as a book designed to be read aloud.

The observations put forth in this chapter pertaining to the *Limburg sermons* collection in manuscript H will on the whole also hold true for stage H*. Apart from Ls. 48, all the *Limburg sermons* are preserved elsewhere, and (moreover) almost without exception in a *Limburg sermons*-context. Manuscript H thus provides us with a reasonable impression of this initial, lost stage in the transmission, about which little is known. There must have existed at least one manuscript that was based directly on H*, given the fact that none of the six other extant corpus manuscripts containing *Limburg sermons* can be traced back directly to H. As the only thirteenth century manuscript, H occupies a somewhat exceptional position within the y2 transmission because it regularly offers its own variants against the other corpus manuscripts in y2. The most striking characteristic of manuscript H are without doubt the references to a male audience. Whereas it is an absolute certainty that the *St. Georgen sermons* were written for nuns, it is very likely that the original collection of *Limburg sermons* was written for a similar audience. The generalizations in the forms of address in the *Limburg sermons* were already present in H*, apparently in order not to restrict the target audience of the Middle Dutch sermons all too narrowly. And yet a number of the interpolated *Limburg sermons* give the impression of having been composed especially for nuns or novices (this is certainly the case for Ls. 46, but probably also for Ls. 43 and Ls. 45). These are indications that the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* had an essentially female audience in mind.

Apart from the textual variants, the slightly flawed yet very well thought-out table of contents in H ultimately constitutes the most important detail of the manuscript. Elsewhere in the transmission such tables of contents do not appear, and as far as can be determined, it was not present in H*, either. The presence of this table of contents demonstrates yet again that manuscript H was made by skillful scribes who knew their trade. One would prefer to situate them in a monastic order—for example amongst the Cistercians, who were so dominantly present in the southern Netherlands during the thirteenth century—where the production of books had reached such a high pinnacle. The creators of H were intent upon making 'their' splendid Middle Dutch manuscript as useful as they could. The indications of length and the descriptions of content contained in the entries for each *Limburg sermons* are an indication that manuscript H was organized as a book to be read aloud. If the intended use had been private study, such information would have been much less relevant. Having as its primary function a resource for oral presentation also accords well in an era when literacy was a rare commodity. Now one or more people who could read could provide an entire community with spiritual sustenance in their own language. The later interpolation of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* in manuscript H, in more or less the same form as the *Limburg sermons*, constitutes a further link to a context of oral presentation.

CHAPTER THREE

FORM AND FUNCTION

The contents of the *Limburg sermons* textual collection is both broad in scope and diverse in nature. Despite all of the differences these disparate texts quite naturally exhibit, there exist as well all kinds of formal, stylistic and content-related idiosyncrasies that crop up on a regular basis. The compiler of *Limburg sermons* took the trouble to cast 'his' texts in the form of sermons, to a greater extent than the example suggested by the *St. Georgen sermons*. Apparently there were good reasons to respect as far as possible the laws of that genre in particular. The texts themselves reveal a remarkably high use of allegory, whereby botanical themes enjoyed particular preference. The violet of humility, the lily of chastity, and the rose of passion are staple images in the *Limburg sermons*. Moreover, in the sixteen interpolated Middle Dutch texts we detect a pronounced preference for imagery from the Song of Songs. Closely related to this is the undeniably strong interest in *minne* mysticism in these sermons. Other formal differences are more evenly spread throughout the collection, such as the systematic use of numerical series and the almost modular structure of the texts.

The *Limburg sermons* were not compiled in any more or less haphazard way, by someone with a particular literary interest, for example. For the inspiration behind this collection we must rather look to the compiler's need to give expression, by means of careful selection and adaptation of texts, to the spiritual identity of a well-defined religious community. It can hardly be otherwise than that the shape these texts were given in this collection says something about the religious ambitions of this circle. This chapter attempts to delve more deeply into the manner in which the *Limburg sermons* were constructed. It deals not so much with the function of the *Limburg sermons* collection as a material object—it is my assumption that this prose corpus was intended primarily as a text to be read from aloud—as it does with the meaning of certain formal and stylistic idiosyncrasies it contains. The primary goal in this endeavor, as it is throughout this study as a whole, is to bring into focus as sharply as possible the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* and their first audience.

The first section provides a schematic overview of one complete *Limburg sermon*, in order to give an impression of the way in which the texts are structured (see also the two examples in Appendix V). Next follow five fairly comprehensive studies in which an attempt is made to place certain formal and stylistic idiosyncrasies in the *Limburg sermons* in a broader (literary) historical context, and situate them within that framework. The second section delves more deeply into the possible reasons behind the marked preference by the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* for the sermon form. The next section comprises a discussion of the most important stylistic feature in the collection, namely allegory, and its links with the medieval practice of Biblical exegesis. Section four deals with the pronounced influence of the Song of Songs on especially the interpolated *Limburg sermons*, and seeks to understand the significance that this book of the Bible had for its intended audience. In the section that follows next we consider the way in which readers and listeners, respectively, of the *Limburg sermons* were meant to use the texts in their own private meditations. We conclude with a consideration of the question of why the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* preferred prose, given the dominance enjoyed by rhymed verse in his day.

3.1 *An Example: The Spiritual Wine Cellar*

In order to avoid the danger of picking out haphazardly all manner of examples from the *Limburg sermons*, I have chosen one sermon that will run like a red thread though this chapter. Because this book's primary concern is the Middle Dutch *Limburg sermons* tradition, it goes without saying that this example text should be chosen from one of the sixteen interpolated texts. Ls. 40 and Ls. 44 are disqualified in advance, as it has been established that these are translations from Latin and German, respectively. It is also the case that the Dutch origins of the seven sermons on the Passion are not entirely certain. In the end we have opted for *Dets dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* [This is the book of the spiritual wine cellar] (Ls. 43), because this text exhibits the highest number of formal aspects we wish to discuss. To begin with, Ls. 43 is a sermon (which is not the case, for example, with Ls. 41 or Ls. 42) and moreover in the preface its author reflects on his own role as preacher. *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* is furthermore unmistakably a sermon on the Song of Songs, although that is also the case for a number of the other interpolated *Limburg sermons*.

What follows below is a paraphrase of *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre*. The aim here is not only to provide a summary of its contents, but also to chart its modular structure, with all of its numerical series. In composing this summary an attempt has been made to retain where possible direct speech and other features of its orality.

Theme:

Ay sute joncfrouwen van Jherusalem, der coninc leitde mi in sinen winkelre ende ordinerde in mi die caritate, dats die sute minne. [Ah, sweet damsels of Jerusalem, the king leads me into his wine cellar and instills in me *caritas*, that is sweet *minne*]

Exordium/protheme:

Would you know why he is king? He is characterized by six royal features: 1) the royal crown, 2) the purple robe, 3) the royal staff, called 'scepter', 4) the coin (mint), 5) the law, and 6) his herald.

We turn first to the *rupere* (herald), to whom four things belong that, alas, do not belong to the preacher of this sermon (*ic* [I]): 1) beautiful clothes, 2) a staff with which he silences the people, 3) a good voice, 4) and the wisdom to know what he should say. But ad 1) I lack the beautiful clothes, that stand for spiritual virtues, ad 2) I do not possess the staff, that stands for God's mercy in good works, so that I cannot silence the people—my fleshly desires and my evil thoughts, ad 3) I lack the strong voice, with which *minne* sings so sweetly, and ad 4) nor do I possess the wisdom to know what I should say as a herald, and when, and how much. How can I presume to speak of the spiritual matters of this king, before whom the angels tremble? But you know that the people are gathering, not to see a holy herald, but to hear the king's command. Let us therefore pray that what is said here redounds to his glory and our salvation. Amen.

Corpus:

The material that we must deal with here concerns the words that the Bride—i.e. the Holy Spirit—addresses to the damsels of Jerusalem. These are those who are inexperienced in obedience and have not yet tasted the sweetness of the Bridegroom. The Holy Spirit says: 'Damsels of Jerusalem, when I sought my beloved (*amis*), he asked me to say what he looked like, for he promised that you would help me search for him. Well, he is white and red—white because of his innocence and red because of his bitter Passion.

Damsels of Jerusalem, I would that my beloved be loved more sweetly than today is the case. He is the king who led me into his wine cellar and instilled in me sweet love [*minne*] through his grace, and taught me to love God above all else.

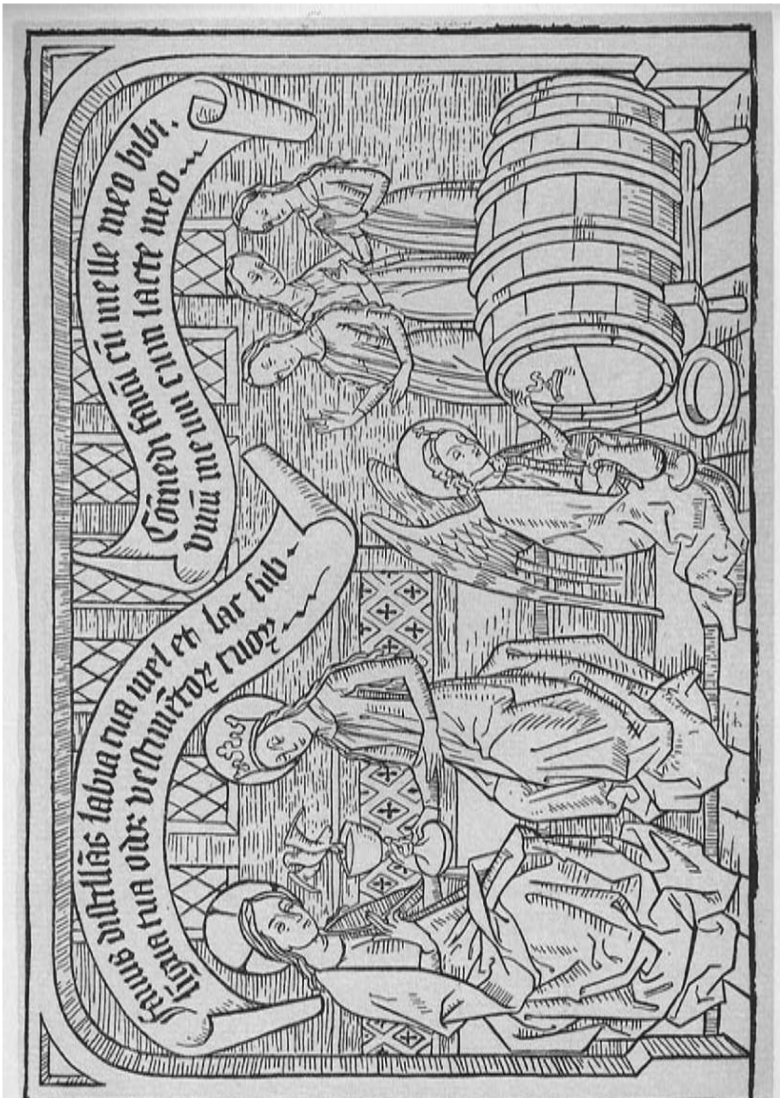

Fig. 17. Blockbook *Cantica Canticorum*. The spiritual wine cellar (reproduced after Delen & Meertens 1949).

Damsels of Jerusalem, so that you will love him all the more, I tell you that the king who led me into his wine cellar is crowned with three crowns. The first was forged in a secret chamber by the Holy Spirit, the second by the Jews, and the third was given to him by his Father in heaven. He wore the first crown in the holy chamber of Mary's womb. This crown was adorned with four precious stones, to wit, 1) purity, i.e. the absence of sin, 2) fullness in mercy, which is to say that he possessed the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, 3) the power to save the sinner from eternal death, and 4) the power to grant eternal life. He wore the second crown during his suffering in the world. The Jews forged this crown with a hammer. The anvil upon which this crown was forged was the hardness of their hearts. The fire of the smithy was their envy. This crown, too, was adorned with four stones: the first was placed there by Christ himself, when he was bathed in the sweat of fear and prayed earnestly to God not to have to die the physical death, the second was placed there by Pilate, who had him scourged, the third was placed by the Jews and the heathens and the fourth by the Jews and the knights, the Jews by counsel and the knights by deed, by which he shed his blood from hands and feet. This crown, too, is adorned with four sorrowful stones. The third crown is much better, for his Father gave it to him in the heavenly palace. This crown, too, is adorned with four precious stones: 1) eternal life, 2) quickness and lightness of body, 3) agility (by which he was able to pass through closed doors to visit his brothers), and 4) clarity, which he displayed to his disciples on the mount, whereby they were dazed with helplessness.

The king's purple robe was made by the angel Gabriel, when he addressed Mary: *Ave Maria, gratia plena*, and Mary aided him by subjugating herself. This cloak was washed when Jesus had himself baptized in the Jordan, it was wrung out during his Passion, it was stretched and bleached upon the Cross. But it was transformed into a beautiful purple robe when Christ arose from the dead. The royal staff is called the *septrum* and stands for the Cross, in which three things lie enclosed: 1) the height of divinity, 2) the depth of wise humanity, and 3) the width of *minne*, which will span from one to the other. The royal coin is the sacred soul of the faithful man, which he shall have to return to God. The royal law is the command that this king himself has decreed: 'I give you a new command, namely that you shall love your neighbor as I have loved you. Behold what I have done for you and do the same for your neighbor.' The soul who follows this new command may rightly say, 'Oh damsels of Jerusalem, the Lord has led me into his wine cellar'. This means that he has given him knowledge of his will.

In this knowledge the soul is replenished with four drinks: 1) well water, 2) wine, 3) mead, and 4) *lutter dranc* [mulled wine]. The three courtly damsels are involved in the preparation of the first drink: the first prepares the drink, the second draws it, and the third serves it. These damsels are called Consideration of Sin, Contrition and Confession. Consideration of Sin prepares her drink with four ingredients: 1) the realization that she has served he who has the power to place souls in eternal torment, 2) the realization that in this brief life she has lost eternal life, 3) the knowledge that she deserves the company of devils and shall be compelled to suffer the nine torments of

hell, and 4) the knowledge of the voice of the angel who shall call everyone to appear before the Judge. Once this damsel has prepared the drink—i.e. she has shed her tears—she then pours it into the vessel of the heart. Next comes the damsel Contrition, who draws the drink from the heart through the narrow opening of the eyes into the beaker of humility. And when the damsel Confession sees this, she approaches quickly, takes up the beaker and pours its contents into the sacred soul. She then says, 'Oh sweet beloved, I shall know you with all my heart.'

Because it is not sufficient merely to leave off evil, but rather one should strive assiduously to do good, the soul now moves on to the second drink, the wine. This drink, too, is served by three damsels, namely Complete Atonement, Discernment, and Wisdom. Complete Atonement prepares the wine with four spices: 1) the shabby clothing of John the Baptist, 2) the meager food that John ate while in the desert, 3) the long vigils in the service of the Lord, and 4) silence. When Discernment sees that the wine is ready—i.e. that thorough penance has been achieved—she measures off the appropriate dosage. This is of the utmost importance, for penance is to be exercised in moderation. Next Wisdom pours the wine and says, 'Every good thing that you do, do only from within God'.

Because the wine of penance is rather strong, it is now followed by sweet mead. 'Oh sweet Jesus, when shall I taste the sweet drink in your wine cellar', the soul pleads. 'When you have conquered all desire and fleshly lust'. The taste of the mead is tempered by four chosen damsels: Spiritual Joy, Hope, Righteousness and Fear. Spiritual Joy adds three sweet herbs to the drink: 1) *vorloepende gracie* [Prevenient Grace] that draws the sinner out of sin, 2) *midevolgende gracie* [Accompanying Grace], which helps mankind to avoid sin, and 3) *navolgende gracie* [Consequent Grace], which helps the soul to live entirely according to God's command and to hear the sweet whisperings of the Holy Spirit.[1] This damsel is justly called Spiritual Joy, for the mead brings with it sweet repose in spiritual contemplation and allows the soul to rest in the bosom of Christ. The first form of grace is the recognition of the mercy with which God views the sinning soul, the second form of grace is the realization that despite the fact that the soul has frequently disappointed him, God has nevertheless established himself in her, and the third form of grace is the thought of he who dwells in the soul and has helped her keep his commandment and continue to live in *minne*. Thereupon damsel Hope brings three more sweet spices to make the mead even sweeter: 1) the company of angels, 2) the resurrection of the body at the final judgment, and 3) eternal life (which God must give to all of us). Behold these spices closely and judge whether they are sweet: when Hope saw that Spiritual Joy had withdrawn entirely from the world, she gave her the gift of the company of angels. Then

[1] The three forms of grace mentioned here may be identified with the scholastic terms *gratia praeveniens, gratia concomitans* and *gratia consequens* (cf. Axters 1937, 136–137, lemma *gratia*). With thanks to Guido de Baere (Antwerp).

she gave her the gift of resurrection, that will make your body shine like the sun, while that of the sinner will stink. And because you will persevere in the service of the Creator and because this brief life brings you sorrow, I give to you yet another gift, eternal life. Taste now whether this mead is sweet in which Spiritual Joy and Hope have mixed these six special spices! When Righteousness sees that the mead is ready, she measures out a draught, for this drink, too, must only be drunk in moderation. And then lady Fear steps forward to pour out the drink, saying as she does: 'Blessed be he who always fears to fall, for he shall stand fast.'

Because this sweet mead is still not enough for the sacred soul, she reaches out hastily for the mulled wine, which is likewise served in courtly fashion by four female servants: Remembering the Passion, Burning Desire, Strength, and Moderation. Remembering the Passion adds eight bitter herbs to the drink, namely that God allowed his son 1) to be struck upon the head, 2) to be spit upon, 3) to be mocked with a crown of thorns, 4) to be scourged, 5) to be forced to carry his cross, 6) to be nailed upon the cross, 7) to be pierced through the side, and 8) to die miserably upon the cross. Burning Desire understands that the drink thus becomes too heavy and adds to it eight sweet spices. These herbs compel the soul to yearn for 1) eternal life without sorrow, 2) joy without sorrow, 3) youth without old age, 4) light without darkness, 5) peace without war, 6) health without illness, 7) love without envy, and 8) to behold the beatific vision of God without sorrow. Then Strength comes forward to help the other two damsels carry this wonder. She implores those who wish to live in God to carry their burdens with joy. God, what a sweet and pure drink that is, when these spices are present in the sacred soul! And in order that this mulled wine not be desired with impatience, lady Moderation comes forward to admonish Burning Desire to patience: 'Oh Burning Desire, thanks to patience you will retain your soul!' Paul had tasted this drink when he asked for his soul to be loosed from his misbegotten body. When the sacred soul has drunk this drink, she desires nothing other than to repose with her Bridegroom.

Lady soul, if you wish to repose with your beloved, then you must acquire four things: 1) thinking often of him, 2) observing him closely, 3) beholding his countenance, and 4) marveling at him. You must remember him in love, he who loves you truly. You must therefore consider three things concerning God: 1) he humbled himself in order to exalt you, 2) he was martyred and buried, and 3) he arose from the dead. You must observe him closely and ascertain whence he comes: from the end of the world, where the sun rises and where people begin to do good deeds, or from where the sun sets, where the people fall into sin? No! He comes from the south, where at midday the sun rests and shines, and where the people burn with love. Lady soul, when you have ascertained this, then you must consider a third aspect to which you must pay attention, and that is that you will behold his divine countenance. You will behold him not only through the drunken thoughts caused by the sweet drink, but you will also see him clearly through the eyes of a purified understanding! Then, like John the Evangelist, you will rest on the bosom of Christ, where he could hear the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. You will look

up intensely at your beloved, for he who looks with desire at the one he loves, succumbs to the sweet burden of love and falls into continuous contemplation, to where you taste such great sweetness that you would rather deny yourself thirty-thousand times over than give up that sweetness. Oh soul, in this sweetness, that is Christ, you must remember three things: 1) the Father, who is almighty, 2) the Son, who is wise, and 3) the Holy Spirit, who flows from the Father and the Son. You must marvel at the fact that you were allowed to taste this sweetness and behold this great good.

Oh loving soul, if you comport yourself with such humility, then the Bridegroom will bring you five *lagtwarien* [medicinal drinks], which are in succession: 1) sweetness, 2) spiritual sweetness, 3) satisfaction, 4) drunkenness, and 5) rest. The first 'lactuary' grants peace and makes you sweet and loving toward your beloved, the second makes you desire your beloved intensely, the third satisfies you entirely with its sweetness, the fourth drowns you in sweetness, whereby you become entirely even-tempered, both toward whoever you love and toward whoever you hate and the fifth imbues you with a peace that is not to be comprehended by a physical body, and that the prophet calls the *summum bonum*. Paul speaks of this great inner peace when he says that this peace transcends the human experience. You desire only to be allowed to remain in this peace.

Closing formula:

Pray to the Lord that he may grant us this peace. Amen.

3.2 *The Fiction of the Sermon*

In *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* the author emphatically characterizes his own role as preacher. Although the herald is only mentioned as the sixth and last of the royal attributes, it is the first to be developed, and moreover with a great deal more attention than the remaining five. A separate allegory is built up round the *rupere* in which four characteristic features of the herald are thematized. The author of Ls. 43 does not hesitate to stress that he does not meet the established requirements. Naturally he is lacking the necessary spiritual virtues (the beautiful clothing) and the good works with which he would be able to silence the crowds (the staff). And alas, he must go without the love that would enable him to speak with such sweetness (the strong voice), just as he does not know what it is he should say (wisdom). This humility topos is hardly unique. In the medieval sermon tradition it was usual for the preacher to utter a *captatio benevolentiae*, preferably in his treatment of the protheme or exordium, in which he declares himself unworthy to

speak the word of God.[2] Humility was the only appropriate attitude for a preacher, despite his being clothed in sacred dignity. Nevertheless the extended consideration of the office of preacher in Ls. 43 betrays a certain degree of introspection on the part of the author that is only strengthened by the rhetorical strength with which he proceeds.

The marked interest displayed by Ls. 43 in the meaning of the sermon and preaching is not unique in the *Limburg sermons* collection. In the previous chapter we have been able to see that the translated *St. Georgen sermons* usually have more in common with traditional sermons than their Middle High German source texts do. In the interpolated *Limburg sermons* the sermon genre is also predominate: the seven Passion sermons, Ls. 40, Ls. 43, Ls. 45, Ls. 46 and Ls. 48 may indeed be classified as sermons. But Ls. 39, Ls. 41 and Ls. 42 are rather to be interpreted as spiritual treatises, although the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* did his best to lend these texts something of the form of the sermon. *Dbuec van heren Selfarts regele* (Ls. 44), a dialogue, is the only exception, although in the table of contents in manuscript H it, too, is listed as a *sermoen*. Additionally there are several *Limburg sermons* in which preaching itself is the subject. In addition to the disquisition on the herald in Ls. 43 this theme is also touched upon in Ls. 10, Ls. 16 (both translated *St. Georgen sermons*) and Ls. 45. In brief: for the circles in which the *Limburg sermons* (and the *St. Georgen sermons*, as well) were produced and read for the first time, the sermon was an important literary genre, the meaning of which became a topic of continuous reflection.

We know practically nothing about the authors of the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons*, but it is certain that they were male ecclesiastics. The simple fact that they so readily employed the sermon genre in order to get their message out leads one to believe that they were no strangers to the pulpit. Within the Church of Rome only priests had the right to preach. Monks could be consecrated as priests—and were in that case empowered to preach within their own monasteries—but this was not at all a requirement. In the twelfth century a fierce debate was being waged on whether such priest/monks were allowed to preach to lay folk. Someone like the Benedictine Rupert of Deutz (†1129) was (of course) of the opinion that they were, but the 'real' priests, especially the canons, fought this contention fiercely.

[2] Cf. Roberts 1988, 80 and Mertens (in press b).

During the course of the thirteenth century several monastic orders came into being whose main task was precisely preaching to the laity. The Franciscans devoted their lives to instructing the people, while the Dominicans—also known as Friars Preachers—used the sermon to do battle with the heresies that threatened Christianity.[3]

The thirteenth-century authors of the *St. Georgen sermons* and *Limburg sermons* must have had their place on this spectrum of influence, but where? They presumably occupied some sort of middle position. They did not preach to lay folk in the world, and certainly not to heretics, but rather to the nuns and possibly monks who lived in monastic communities. They were thus active in the *cura monialium*, the pastoral care of female religious, who lived the life of religious, but were not considered *clerici* or literate. Whether the authors of the *Limburg sermons* were secular clergy or monks, no matter which order they belonged to, it is no longer possible to ascertain—although the latter certainly seems more likely. We do not known much about these preachers' intentions, but perhaps it would not be going too far to summarize their attitude by means of the twelfth-century adage *docere verbo et exemplo* [to teach by word and example].[4] These anonymous preachers were undoubtedly more learned than their 'unschooled' audience. Theirs was the task to explain the bible. But whoever speaks the word of God is compelled to live and act in His spirit, as well.

The author of *Dit compt regt op alre heilgen dage* [This is appropriate for all holy days] (Ls. 10) was at any rate very much convinced of the heavy responsibility that rested on his shoulders. This Middle High German author treats a theme from John's Book of Revelations: 'And I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that did fly through the midst of heaven: "Come, gather yourselves together to the great supper of God."' (Rev. 19:17). He next compares the apocalyptic angel to the preacher and the sun to Scripture:

> Bi den engele es ons betekent een igelic predekere, bi der sonnen es betekent die heilege screft, dar hi in sal staen, ende dat hi rip met enre

[3] On the role of the preacher in the Middle Ages, see e.g. Kienzle 2000b, 151–155 and Muessig 2002, 80–86.

[4] This adage is also the title of Bynum 1979, where she explains how in the 12th century the monastic orders on the one hand, and the orders of canons, on the other, gave expression to a spiritual ideal in which brotherly love received more attention than in the past, resulting among other things in an increase in preaching activities.

> groter stemmen, dat betekent dat die grote begerde die der predikere sal hebben te Gots worde. Ende also alse der engel bat, also sal oec der predikere bidden dat volc te himelrike.[5]
>
> [By the angel we are to understand any given preacher, by the sun the holy scriptures, in which he stands and that he called out with a storing voice betokens the great yearning on the part of the preacher for God's word. And just as the angel summoned (the birds), so too the preacher beckons the people to the heavenly kingdom.]

By means of a slight digression the preacher makes it clear to his audience that he is aware of his status as one of the chosen. But he underscores as well that no one should identify more with the word of God than he who speaks it.

Despite his unworthiness, the herald in Ls. 43 is confident that he, with all of his faults, will nevertheless utter the command of the king the moment he opens his mouth. He who is chosen to be a preacher may be certain that God will give him the right words. The author of Ls. 16, *Dets wie dwort ons heren sal wonen en ons* [This concerns how the word of our Lord will dwell within us], explains to his audience how this process works:

> Alse een predekere prediken wilt Gots wort, so denct hi ten irsten wat hi spreken wilt, ende alse hit denct, so wert dat wort geboren in sin herten, ende van din herten vlitet in den monde. Ende so geft hi dan van sinen monde dat wort dat geboren wart in sinen herten te verstane al dengenen die jegenwordeg sin ende sin wort horen. Dat vlit dan ute sinen monde in hare oren ende van din oren int herte, ende also ontfeet igelic mensche geheel ende ongedeelt. Ende nogtan so wie wide ende wie verre der predekere sin wort deelt ende wie vel liden dat hit geft, so blift heme dog dat selve wort.[6]
>
> [When a preacher desires to preach the word of God, he first contemplates what it is he wishes to say, and when he thinks about it, the words are born in his heart, and from his heart they hasten to his mouth. And he then utters through his mouth the words that were born in his heart to all those who are present and may hear his words. They then fly from his mouth into their ears and hearts, and thus such folk receive them completely and undividedly. And no matter how widely and how far the preacher disseminates his words, or to however many people, they nevertheless remain the same words.]

[5] Kern 1895, 266:20–267:1.
[6] Kern 1895, 358:16–27.

The preacher, then, functions as an intermediary between God and mankind. The words that he speaks never lose their force, no matter how many people hear them.

The sacred labors of the preacher come into their own when he stands before an audience who recognizes his role as intermediary and listens eagerly to his words. The thirteenth-century movement of female religious provided ample opportunity of this kind. There were numerous women who adopted a religious way of life that required more of their priests than just the administration of the sacraments (especially confession and Eucharist), but who, unlettered as they often were, were also dependent upon male religious for explanations of Scripture. These thousands of nuns and Beguines probably constituted the most eager and inspirational audience that a thirteenth-century preacher could find. In the female *vitae* from Liège/Brabant there are frequent descriptions of how special relationships developed between a preacher and his daughters of confession. The canon regular Jacques de Vitry, for example, placed great store in his role as intermediary of God's word to the unlettered Mary of Oignies. On the other hand, her intense piety also had an effect on Jacques' preaching; Mary taught the future cardinal by means of her exemplary lifestyle.[7] Margaret of Ypres was also frequently able to steer her Dominican confessor Siger of Lille onto the right path. If he did not know what to preach about, he was wont to go to the pious Margraret, after which he would return home, inspired, and preach like never before.[8]

Unfortunately such anecdotes are lacking about the authors and readers of the *Limburg sermons*, but every once in a while such a special relationship is hinted at. In Ls. 16 there is an extended discussion of what the relationship between preacher and audience should be like. This translated *Sankt Georgener Predigt* has as its theme what is called in H *Verbum Christi habitet habundanter in corde vestro* [Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly].[9] This text banks off, as it were, a passage from Paul's letter to Colossians (Col. 3:16).[10] At the beginning of his sermon the author immediately distinguishes between two forms of God's word:

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[7] See *AASS*, June IV (23 June), ch. 79 (p. 657) and King & Feiss 1999, 121–122.

[8] Cf. Meersseman 1948, ch. 33 and King 1999, 45–46.

[9] Kern 1895, 355, 10–11.

[10] The Vulgate reads here *Verbum Christi habitet in vobis abundanter in omni sapientia docentes et commonentes vosmet ipsos psalmis hymnis canticis spiritalibus in gratia cantantes in cordibus vestris Deo*. The reading in G, f. 75vb, departs fairly radically from the Vulgate, but H appears to give its own variant reading.

Twerehande Gots wort suldi mercken. Deen es Gots wort ende es Got selver. Dander es eens igelics predekers wort, dats van Gode ende en es dog Got nit. [You will be aware of two kinds of God's word. One is God's word and it is God himself. The other one is every preacher's word, which comes from God but is not God himself].[11] This Middle High German preacher states in his *captatio benevolentiae* that the word of a preacher may well come from God, but is not to be equated with God.[12] He next explains how both kinds can strengthen the heart of the believer. The word of God that is God is meant to exhort and strengthen one. It has the power to keep vices at bay and serves thus as a shield against sin:

> Mant u ende sterct u selver met Gots worde als u eneg kommer ogte eneg verdrit over gaet. Nempt Gots wort tenen scilde in uwen stride ende set din scilt vor u tallen steden dar u die viende vellen willen, ende wert u sterckelike met Gots worde ende met guder leringen die gi gehort hebt. Vecht u ane onkuscheit, die verdrift met arbeide van lighamen. Vecht u ane toren, din verdrift met gutheide. Vecht u ane ongedout, die verdrift met gedout. Jegen hoverde oetmut, jegen tragheit erntstagtegheit, jegen girheit armude ende, cortelike gesproken, wat ondogeden u ane vicht, die verdrift met dogeden.[13]
>
> [Exhort and strengthen yourself with the word of God if you are overcome by any worry or sorrow. Take God's word into battle as your shield and fix your shield before you in all places wherever your adversaries seek to defeat you and you will be strengthened by God's word by virtue of the good teaching you have heard. Fight against lechery, which you may vanquish through physical labor. Fight against wrath, which you may vanquish through goodness. Fight against impatience, which you may vanquish with patience. Against pride, humility; against sloth, zeal, against greed, poverty, in short, whatever vice you fight against, vanquish it with virtue.]

The author of the German text does not say how his audience came into contact with God's word, but the translator of the *Limburg sermons* provides an explanation. He added the phrase *ende met guder leringe die gi gehort hebt* to his original.[14] It would appear that he considered the mediation of spiritual guides who could provide instruction in the Scriptures of the utmost importance.

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[11] Kern 1895, 355:13–15.

[12] The author of *Dets van der heilger selen*, too, remarks upon the fact that it is not the preacher speaking, but rather God using him as his intermediary (Kern 1895, 617:2–11).

[13] Kern 1895, 355:25–356:10.

[14] Cf. G, f. 76ra.

But the Middle High German author likewise valued highly the function of the preacher as intermediary: after all, he brings the word of God to the people. In order to make the position of the preacher clear, he employs the old image of spiritual bread.[15]

> Dat wort van din predekere dat suldi also horen ende verstaen dat blive wonende in u herte, alse u der predekere ontgaet, dat gi v selver geleren cont met Gots worde. Ende also, wat u der predekere vore snit ende maelt, dat gi dat derna bact ende eet. Son dorf di altoes nit ute lopen tanderen liden broet ontlenen.[16]
>
> [You should listen to and understand the words of your preacher such that they remain in your heart, so that if you lack a preacher, you may teach yourself with God's word. And so, whatsoever your preacher harvests and grinds for you, you may thereafter bake it and eat it. Thus you need not ever go out to borrow bread from another.]

As a practiced Latinist and theologian, the preacher performs a number of preliminary treatments that his audience is hardly capable of. He provides the raw materials for the bread, but the listening believer can finish the work himself. He bakes the bread and, more importantly, eats it himself. Only then do the words of the preacher become the word of God and they can have their salutary effect.

According to the author of Ls. 16, it was very important that his audience become spiritually independent. By invoking the greatest preacher in history, after Christ—*also leert ons sente Paulus, der grote predikere* [So we are told by St. Paul, the great preacher]—he exhorts his listeners to become their own preachers.[17] All the good that is spoken in the sermon must be stored in their hearts. Whoever does that is no longer necessarily dependent upon someone else—read: a preacher—for his spiritual sustenance:

> Dats te secgene, gin sult nit altoes tanderen liden lopen trost ende raet suken. Gi sult u selver trosten met Gots worde, dat gi gehort hebt van den ewangelisten, van den heilegen ende van den predikeren. Ende die leringe suldi leghen ende hauden in u herte, also of gi nemmer predikere sin nog horen en sult in enen jare ogte in tween, dat gi u selver leren ende manen const ten dogeden ende te guden wercken. Gin sult dar ombe nit

[15] Cf. Kienzle 2000c, 283 on the bread metaphor.

[16] Kern 1895, 355:16–21.

[17] Kern 1895, 356:21–22. Paul's significance as a preacher is stressed in Ls. 19, too: after Jesus himself he was the greatest of the kind in all of Christendom (Kern 1895, 385:15–18).

> vertregen ane dogeden allen hebtdi engene predikere als decke als gi wilt. Gi sult u selver prediken ende leren gut leven ende dogetlic leven ende heileg leven ende sult na der himelscer genaden dencken ende trost ane Gode suken, dar der gewareg trost in es. Want der predikere es decke te verre troest ende raet ane heme te sukene. Gi sult trost ende raet suken ane Gode, want hi es vol van suten troeste ende van subtilen rade ende vol van mildecheide ende van allen dogeden hundertdusentveldeg vore alle predikere. Ane heme suct al dis gi bedorft. Hi geft u suten trost ende nawen raet.[18]
>
> [That is to say, you will not have to run to another to seek consolation and advice. You will console yourself with God's word, which you heard from the evangelists and from the saints and from the preachers. And you will store and keep this teaching in your heart so that if you do not see or hear a preacher for one or maybe two years, you may teach and exhort yourself to virtue and good works. You will therefore not become slow in virtue though you do not see a preacher as frequently as you would like. You will preach to yourself and admonish yourself to lead a good life, a virtuous one and holy, and you will be mindful of heavenly grace and seek consolation in God, in whom true consolation resides. For the preacher is often too far away to seek consolation and advice from him. You shall seek consolation and counsel from God, for he is full of sweet consolation and wise counsel and full, too, of mercy and a hundred thousand times more than any preacher. Seek in him all that you lack. He will give you sweet consolation and good advice.]

The author of this sermon makes it crystal clear that as preacher he plays a merely subservient role and that his listeners should not depend solely upon him. If no preacher is available, people should be able to provide themselves with their own spiritual sustenance.

The relationship between the preacher and his audience is also touched upon in our sample text, *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre*, though the author chooses a different approach:

> Ic en hebbe oec nit der wisheit dat ic wete wat ic rupen sule ende wanneer ende wie vele, also dat ic spreken moge metten guden sent Paulus dar hi sprict: 'Onder gesteliken liden sprecwi van groter wisheide ende onder eenvoltgen liden sprec wi van Jhesum die an den cruce starf.'[19]
>
> [I do not have the wisdom to know what I should speak, or when, or for how long, so that I emulate the good St. Paul when he says: 'Amongst

[18] Kern 1895, 357:5–23.

[19] Kern 1895, 583:14–19. The citation from Paul is not a literal one, but rather a contamination of 1 Cor. 1:23–24 and 2:6 and 2:12. With thanks to Wim Janse (Leiden).

> the clergy we speak great wisdom and amongst simple folk we speak of Jesus who died on the cross.']

Making such a distinction between a lower and a higher audience only makes sense if one's listeners belong to the category of people who are in need of *groter wisheide*. The author of Ls. 43 makes as it were a pact with his audience, to whom he grants a special status. This does not mean that they have nothing more to learn. The audience of this *Limburg sermon* are addressed as 'damsels of Jerusalem' under which category the author understands those who are inexperienced in obedience (in the monastic life) and who have not yet experienced the encounter with the Bridegroom. But that description once again underscores the elect status of Ls. 43's audience (to which the brethren in manuscript H would also belong). The author of *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* shows them the way that will lead to the Bridegroom.

In *Dets van der heilger selen* (Ls. 45) the relationship between preacher and the brides of Christ constitutes a clear leitmotif. This author, too, shows his awareness of the audience he has before him:

> Dergene die sermonen sal, hi sal ernstelike sin wort besien ende sal oec besien degene dise hoeren sulen, alsoe datter nit en bide dengenen hart spise die te vuden sin met melke, ende dengenen die hart spise vermogen nit en bide kintsche vudinge. Mar also als mi sculdech es te gevene den jungen ende den begennenden ligte ende segte leringe, also es mi sculdech onder volkomen lide te spreken van groter wisheide.[20]
>
> [He who would preach must consider his words seriously and consider as well those who will hear them, so that he does not offer solid food to those who must be fed milk, nor to offer childish fare to those who need solid food. But just as it behooves one to give light and easy teaching to the young and novices, so too one is obliged to offer great wisdom to the perfected ones.]

Unlike Ls. 43, *Dets van der heilger selen* is not aimed at youths and novices on the spiritual path, but rather at the advanced. The material demanded by this spiritual elite is also categorized as *groter wisheide*. The text then continues:

> Bi dien est dat wi u vor leghen gestelik leringe, want wi geloeven dat desulke van u nit en wonen in vlesche mar in geste, ende dasse volgen

[20] Kern 1895, 616:11–18.

> der gesteliker brut, die segt: 'Min sile es onttoit sent min vrint te mi sprac.'[21]
>
> [It is for this reason that we present to you spiritual teachings, for we believe that you do not live in the flesh but in the spirit, and that you follow the spiritual bride, who says: 'My soul has thawed since my beloved spoke to me.']

Nor is an average audience being addressed here: these are people who have no interest in clinging to the material world, but who wish to follow in the footsteps of the spiritual bride. This is in essence no different from what we saw in Ls. 43, where the damsels of Jerusalem listen to what the bride has to say.

The author of Ls. 45 distinguishes three ways in which Christ speaks to the people. The loving soul can hear her beloved 1) through preachers who speak in his name, 2) through his writings, and 3) through inner grace.[22] The latter way implies that the listeners of *Dets van der heilger selen* have already experienced contact with the Bridegroom first-hand (see § 2.11). Nevertheless, in this context as well the spoken word is the first thing mentioned, before the Bible and the canon. Thus this *Limburg sermon* presupposes an audience into whose ear Christ may have whispered a thing or two, but who for their theological information was compelled to turn to a pastor rather than attempt to read the Scriptures themselves.

In his treatment of one of the phrases from the Song of Songs explained in this sermon, the author touches on the function of preachers and pastors. The passage in question reads *Invenerunt me custodes civitatis: si vonden mi, de huden van der stat. Si slugen mi ende wonden mi* [They found me, the keepers of the city. They struck me and wounded me].[23] Here the keepers of the city stand for the preachers and prelates of the Church, who must provide every form of aid to the lovers of Christ in their search for Him.

> Warlics, die Gode minnen, si sulen huden sin stat ende sulen vuden sin scaep, sulc stont met casteien, sulc stont met biddene, sulc stont met ontfarmenisse. Dit sin degene dise wisen ende leren sulen met prediken ende met exemplen van guden werken.[24]

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[21] Kern 1895, 616:19–22.
[22] Kern 1895, 616:30–621:16.
[23] Kern 1895, 621:18–20.
[24] Kern 1895, 622:7–11.

> [Truly, those who love God must tend to his estate and feed his sheep, sometimes by castigation, sometimes by praying, and sometimes by taking pity on them. These are they who must guide and teach them through preaching and with examples of good works.]

This final sentence is a Middle Dutch translation of *docere verbo et exemplo*. The author of Ls. 45 pursues the theme of castigation further. The words of the preacher are a sword, for short range, and an arrow, for long range, with which the soul is wounded.[25] The veil taken from the bride by the keepers of the city (Song of Songs 5:7) is likewise allegorized: the preachers remove the veil when they say that one should abandon the worries of the world.[26]

It is especially in *Limburg sermons* 43 and 45 that the preacher-authors emphatically present themselves as guides to the contemplative life. They see it as their task to guide their listeners to a meeting with the Bridegroom. Both authors set themselves up as mystagogues: they write introductions to the mystical life. The entire process of the encounter with God is written preferably in the language of the Song of Songs. The author of Ls. 45 pursues the role played by pastors the furthest. They are obliged to aid their spiritual brothers in every way in their search for the Bridegroom. Painful confrontations along the way are not to be eschewed; the preachers may do anything to keep the brides of Christ on task. These two authors are perhaps more mystically oriented than the authors of most of the other *St. Georgen sermons* and *Limburg sermons*, but the intentions of the latter do not differ much in essence. They introduce an unschooled audience to both ascetic and contemplative aspects of the spiritual life.

Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre is one of the *Limburg sermons* most emphatically structured as a sermon. Its argument is built around a biblical theme (though it does not appear in that precise form in the Song of Songs). A number of key concepts in the theme are allegorized and in that way the hidden meaning of Scripture is explained to the audience. Ls. 43 contains numerous elements that suggest oral delivery, such as

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[25] Kern 1895, 622:12–623:2. Ls. 45 here puts the *Vulnerata caritate ego sum: ic ben wont van minnen* in the bride's mouth (Kern 1895, 622:29–30), but those words do not appear in that form in the Song of Songs. The Latin phrase is found in the first part of Bernard of Clairvaux's *De diligendo deo* (Leclercq, Talbot & Rochais 1957–1977, vol. 3, 124,18–19, where it is taken to be an allusion to Song of Songs 2:5). Was *De diligendo deo* a model for the author of Ls. 45, as it had been for Ls. 41?

[26] Kern 1895, 623:14–32.

the addressing of the audience as 'damsels of Jerusalem' and the frequent use of direct speech. Needless to say, this sermon also contains a reflection on the office of preacher. And it is by no means certain that *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* was ever actually delivered anywhere as a sermon. In the oldest form in which we know the text, in manuscript H, Ls. 43 already functions as a text to be read aloud, and not as a model sermon. This paradoxical state of affairs proves unsurprising, for it obtains with practically all medieval sermons. '[…] it is possible to assert that a sermon was not preached in its extant form but impossible to establish definitely that it was', writes Beverly Mayne Kienzle in *The Sermon* about the extant medieval sermon in general.[27]

The obvious next question is whether the sermon context evoked in *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* is in fact feigned. In other words: did the author of Ls. 43 choose to frame his text as a sermon, without intending ever to deliver it from the pulpit?[28] As strange as this may seem at first blush, there is certainly evidence to support this claim. Collections of vernacular sermons like the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* were in fact of little use to preachers. There are indeed old compilations of vernacular model sermons, such as that of Priester Konrad and Maurice de Sully, but they were primarily intended for the *clericus simplex*, the simple parochial priest working in the world. Monastic sermons normally were delivered by clerics who could be expected to have good Latin. If this experienced preachers had any real need for a model, then it is likely to have been a very brief one. An outline containing the theme and interpretation, with the most important theological arguments, would have been sufficient. Possible exempla would often be indicated by a single catchword, because they were improvised at the pulpit anyway.[29] Sermons copied out in full such as the *Limburg sermons*, complete with references to the actual performance context (preaching), suggest therefore a quite different background.

There exists a younger manuscript in which the sermons of Priester Konrad function not as model texts, but rather as didactic literature. This change of function may be deduced from among other things the way in which the original texts have been adapted: the Latin passages

[27] Kienzle 2000d, 966.

[28] Schiewer 2000, 863 emphatically leaves open the possibility that the preaching context was feigned in medieval sermons.

[29] On the issue of model sermons, preachers, and their audience, see D'Avray 1985, 104–131, who provides numerous examples.

from the Bible and patristic texts have been omitted, direct address of the audience has been avoided, second person plural forms have been converted to first person singular, and all direct references to preaching have been removed. The compiler of this manuscript has thus taken pains to remove the sermonly qualities of Priester Konrad's sermons, whereby the remaining texts have assumed the appearance of treatises.[30] Quite opposite forces seem to be at work in the *Limburg sermons*. Addresses to the audience, it is true, have been cast in the first person singular, unlike the *St. Georgen sermons*, but they have not been tampered with. Moreover, diverse features have been added—opening and concluding formulas, colloquial speech, 'Wechselrede'—that reinforce precisely the sermonly nature of these Middle Dutch texts.[31] Probably due to their function as texts to be read aloud, the *Limburg sermons* have evolved away from the genre of the treatise.

Rüdiger Schnell noted the striking differences that sometimes occur in a pair of German adaptations, frequently preserved together in the same manuscript, of Latin wedding sermons by Jacques de Voragine (†1298).[32] The *Predigt auf die Hochzeit zu Kana* [Sermon on the Wedding at Cana] was, like its Latin exemplar, intended as a model sermon and contains among other things didactic phrases in the third person. The *Predigt vom ehelichen Leben* [Sermon on the Married Life] contains numerous oral traits, despite the fact that it has been established that this text was meant to be read, not performed. The peculiar situation presents itself that the real sermon is dry and formal, whereas the literary text has a more lively character. According to Schnell, the staging of the *Predigt vom ehelichen Leben* as an orally performed text is a clear indication of its primary function as a text to be read (either silently or out loud). He would have us regard the lively style of the German sermons by Berthold von Regensburg in the same light: it is precisely the markers of orality that indicate to the reader that he is reading a sermon.[33] The literary presentation of the *Limburg sermons* as sermons, along with the use of colloquial speech, could also be interpreted in the same way.

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[30] The manuscript in question is ms. Basel, UB, G^2 II 58, a paper codex dated to 1382, the first owner of which is unknown. For a description, see Mertens 1971, 14–28; for more on the adaptation of the text, see pp. 49–52.

[31] Cf. Williams-Krapp 1980, 11, on sermon manuscripts that were made to be read by *illiterati* (see § 2.14).

[32] Schnell 1999, 334–354.

[33] Schnell 1999, 354 n. 151.

Now, it is rather understandable that the Bavarian Franciscans who edited the German sermons of Berthold von Regensburg recorded the texts as if the famous preacher were delivering them himself. But why did the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* want the prose pieces he had collected, among which there were several letters and treatises, to cast them in the form of sermons? I can see two important motivations for this preference in genre. In the first place, the sermon offers the opportunity for a lively presentation of fairly difficult material. By staging the context of sermon delivery, the author could readily make use of colloquial language and mini-dramas could be staged in the form of question and answer games. At a time when most people could read little or not at all, the use of such devices was practically a necessity.[34] That this sort of thing could be appealing to educated readers is demonstrated by the structure of the *Liber de ordine, habitu et professione canonicorum ordinis Præmonstratensis* [The Book of the order, dress, and profession of the Premonstratensian order of canons] by the twelfth-century Premonstratensian Adam of Dryburgh.[35] In this work he explains for the novices in his order how a monk is to live. But instead of writing a long prose treatise, Adam divided his material over fourteen *sermons*. Because readers were in that way addressed directly, as it were, they could better understand the message and moreover their spirits could more easily be enkindled.[36] In the twelfth century it was apparently difficult enough even for Premonstratensian novices to digest a long piece of prose. In choosing the more lively and direct sermon form Adam sought to accommodate a less well-educated audience. It must be noted that the audience of the *Limburg sermons* was undoubtedly of a lesser intellectual level than that of novices. For them the sermon form was even more appropriate.

The second motif has to do with the great authority enjoyed by the preacher at the time when the *Limburg sermons* were composed. The normal context in which unlearned lay folk came into contact with

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[34] The Franciscans took great pains to present their vernacular sermons in a comprehensible fashion, e.g. using games, fables or puppets (cf. Taylor 2000, 750–751). Kienzle 2000c, 974 maintains that vernacular sermons are on the whole more lively than the Latin ones, a phenomenon that is no doubt related to the issue of audience.

[35] A biography of Adam of Dryburgh is provided by Bulloch 1958; on his literary works and attitudes see for example Bynum 1979, 60–66.

[36] *In hoc autem libro Sermones quatuordecim sunt. Quem idcirco per sermones distinxi, ut eorum sic quasi præsens allocutio legentium et illustret intellectum, et inflammet affectum* (*PL* 198, 441). Cf. Holdsworth 1998, 295.

God and his intentions was when they came together as a community to listen to a priest explain the word of God. This was also the case with the female religious, who were rarely, if ever, able to engage in exegesis on their own. Feigning a preaching situation in written texts immediately invoked a widely known and familiar atmosphere in which the word of God was normally spoken. For someone with a religious message to deliver, then, the sermon genre was the most obvious medium, even if the message had never actually been delivered orally, but was immediately committed to writing. The authors of the *Limburg sermons* must have been priests, so they would not even have had to assume an unfamiliar role if they wished to employ the sermon genre. These religious literally preached with their pens. Incidentally, whenever a written sermon was read out loud in the confines of the monastic community, for example during refectory, its setting was a close approximation of liturgical preaching.[37]

3.3 *Bible and Allegory*

From a stylistic point of view, allegory is the dominate element in *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* in every aspect. The text is based on two sets of imagery, that of the king and the wine cellar, whereas the protheme incorporates the further allegory of the herald. Moreover, rather than being addressed directly, the listeners are metaphorically addressed as 'damsels of Jerusalem'. Although not all of the *Limburg sermons* are written with such colorful imagery as Ls. 43, the general employment of metaphors and allegories is one of the striking constants in our collection of texts. The preference for literally flowery language exhibited by the authors has already been discussed. Far more extensively than is the case with the mystical wine cellar, the imagery of the orchard of love is explored in diverse *Limburg sermons*.

[37] This effect would only be stronger if the reading was performed by someone with a pastoral status, for example the confessor of the community. But we know little about the practical uses to which the *LS* were put during the thirteenth-century as a text to be read from, except that the indications of length in H suggest that they were intended to be read aloud. For the fifteenth-century manuscripts we may assume that they were used for reading in refectory and in private. For refectory reading during this period in the Low Countries, see Lingier 2000; for the situation amongst the choir nuns of Windesheim, Scheepsma 1997, especially 65–69 and 75–80.

The methodology of the author of Ls. 43 is everything but original. On the contrary, allegory dominates on all fronts in the sermon literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[38] There is a great deal of allegory in the *St. Georgen sermons*, too, whether it be in 'real' sermons or in pieces of a different origin. Let us take for example Rd. 38 (Ls. 2), a sermon with the theme *Et erunt signa in sole et luna et stellis* [And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; Luke 21:25]. There follows next a quotation from Revelations 8:3, in which John sees in a vision that the sun, moon and stars lose a third of their brilliance when an angel blows on the horn. The author of this sermon takes the images of the 'sun' and 'moon' as the point of departure for his explication of the meaning of Christ and Mary, respectively. Three characteristic features of the sun and the moon are applied to Jesus and his mother. The apocalyptic detail of the loss of light is linked to the crucifixion, when the sun and moon indeed ceased to shine. Most of the *St. Georgen sermons* were structured in this way: one or more concepts from the theme form the impetus for a more or less extensive allegorization. Other vernacular religious texts of the period are also dominated by allegory, whether it be *Die Lilie* or *Die heilige Regel für ein vollkommenes Leben*.

If we want to understand more about this preference for allegory, then we must venture into a complex field of research. Allegory is after all one of the most widely applied stylistic features in medieval literature, and it moreover appears in all manner of variant forms that influence each other reciprocally.[39] A precise definition for it did not exist in the Middle Ages: in practice just about any kind of figurative language could be labeled 'allegory.'[40] I will not explore the literary theoretical and hermeneutic backgrounds of this phenomenon in depth here, but rather touch briefly upon a number of points that may help clarify our understanding of the *Limburg sermons* and the methodology of their authors.[41]

[38] Cf. e.g. Kienzle 2000c, 281–285 on the Latin sermon before 1200, or Zink 1976, 263–292 (L'art oratoire et l'expression allégorique) for the OF sermon.

[39] Surveys of medieval allegorical literature in the vernacular are to be found in e.g. Glier 1979 and Glier 1984.

[40] Cf. Warnar 1995, 109–110 as well as Noë 1989, 42 n. 7, who concentrate in particular on allegory in the Middle Dutch religious literature.

[41] An overview of the breadth of the research on allegory is found in e.g. Haug 1979.

With the aid of Dante Alighieri (1265–1321)—himself a contemporary of the translators/authors of the Middle Dutch *Limburg sermons*—we may immediately make an essential distinction that is also of significance in this context. Dante was very much aware of the fact that two paradigms obtained in the literature of his day, the 'allegory of the poets' and the 'allegory of the theologians.'[42] The 'allegory of the poets' had its roots in the classical rhetorical tradition and consists in principle of the skill of the poet to deliver his message indirectly, rather than directly, in order to achieve greater power of expression. Personification is perhaps the most frequently employed variant of allegory, of which the *Roman de la Rose* is the undisputed epitome in vernacular literature.

The 'allegory of the theologians' has an entirely different basis, namely the exegetical hermeneutic. While the poet employs an image of his own choosing in order to clarify his own, and thus a human, insight, the theologian seeks to unveil the absolute meaning of an image created by God. The 'allegory of the theologians' has its roots in the symbolic way in which medieval man viewed the world and attributed figurative meaning to everything that he observed. In a familiar passage from the *Eruditiones didascalicae* [Teachings of instruction], Hugh of St. Victor (†1141) describes this world view as follows:

> Universus enim mundus iste sensibilis quasi liber est scripto digito Dei, hoc est virtute divina creatus, et singulae creaturae quasi figurae quaedam sunt non humano placito inventae, sed divino arbitrio institutae ad manifestandam invisibilem Dei sapientiam.[43]
>
> [All the visible world is namely a book written by God's finger, that is to say that is created by divine power, and the individual creatures are to be understood as allegories that cannot be comprehended by human faculties, but have been initiated by the divine will in order to reveal the invisible wisdom of God.]

Creation was thus seen as the expression of God's intentions for the world. Man may discern these intentions by interpreting all created things allegorically and subsequently decoding them.[44]

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[42] Nauta 1995, especially 419–421; cf. Freytag 1982, 15–17. Vekeman 1976 makes an equally meaningful distinction between *allegoria in verbis* and *allegoria in factis* based on the visions of Hadewijch.

[43] *PL* 176, 814. Cf. Wackers 1989, 70.

[44] A survey of the theory behind the allegorical interpretations of Scriptures is provided by Freytag 1982, 15–43.

In the sermon entitled *Von den siben planêten* [Concerning the seven planets] Berthold von Regensburg says that *iu leien* [you lay folk] have received two books from God to read, namely the heaven and the earth. The *pfaffen* [priests], on the other hand, have two real books: the Old and New Testaments.[45] Unschooled lay folk must read the 'book of nature' or creation and draw their lessons from there about what God has in store for them. The reading and interpretation of Holy Scripture was the exclusive domain of the clergy, given the fact that it required special skills. Whereas God reveals himself in creation at the level of things, in the Bible he expresses himself in human language. But given the assumption that language itself is created, linguistic expressions, too, must be understood as allegories: they are the conveyers of figurative meaning. According to medieval semiotics, a word does not refer simply to the object it denotes, but it has a hidden meaning, as well. Thus all linguistic expressions have not just a literal, but also a spiritual meaning.[46]

As Berthold von Regensburg indicated in his sermon, the primary task of theology is to establish the hidden meaning of scripture and, where necessary, explain this to Christianity. It goes without saying that this was a tremendously difficult endeavor, especially when it pertains to the non-literal meaning. With the advent of scholasticism and its need to systematize, the fourfold method of exegesis came into vogue. In addition to the literal, historical meaning of the Bible, three further layers of religious meaning were distinguished: the allegorical sense explains the meaning of a word in Scriptures within the Christian faith, the tropological or moral sense establish what the implications are for the life of the individual, and the anagogical sense determines the (eschatological) consequences for Christianity as a whole.[47]

Against this background, then, what role do the Bible and allegory play in the *Limburg sermons*? The authors of these sermons took pains to explain something of the hidden meaning of God's word to their audience. This audience did not consist of *leien*, but neither did it consist of *pfaffen*, to use Berthold's terminology. The readers and listeners of the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* occupied a position somewhere in between: they did indeed live as religious, but belonged

[45] Cf. Pfeiffer & Strobl 1862–1880, vol. 1, 18:1–49:5.
[46] Of fundamental importance here is Ohly 1977.
[47] The standard work on the fourfold method of exegesis is De Lubac 1959–1964; of great importance is also Smalley 1952.

nevertheless to the class of the *illiterati*. This is the term that clerics used to indicate those who, unlike themselves, were not well trained in the study of Latin.[48] In Ls. 25 (Rd. 73) there is a brief allegory of the book that illustrates this difference nicely. The author distinguishes between three books that have much to teach those who lead the contemplative life.[49] The first of these is the heart, in which one may read what his shortcomings are, so that he may better his ways. *Dander buc es die screft, dar sal der mensche in lesen sutecheit ende wisheit. En can hi oec der screft nit lesen, so sal hise gerne horen ende begeren* [The second book is Scripture, in which one may read sweetness and wisdom. If one cannot read Scripture, then he must eagerly hear it spoken].[50] The third book is allotted the most space by far here: this is the living book of Jesus Christ, that was written on Good Friday, with three nails and a spear. From the way in which the second book is described it would appear that by no means all members of intended audience of the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* were able to read the Bible themselves. To the extent that the 'reading' of their own hearts and the Passion of Christ did not suffice, these people had to rely on readings from and explanations of the Bible by willing *litterati*. Sermons from the pulpit, but also written sermons like the *Limburg sermons*, were thus of preeminent importance in the translation of the biblical message for unschooled religious. But a systematic study of the Bible, which might indicate a 'scientific' interest of sorts, is certainly not what we see in the *Limburg sermons*.[51] Rarely is any attention paid to the literal sense of the biblical text. In most cases our authors skip directly to the non-literal meaning, from which implications for a way of life that is to be emulated are usually drawn.

According to Frühwald, however, there is an exception to this rule, namely Ls. 13 (Rd. 54), which bears the Middle Dutch inscription *Dit sprict van gesteliken levene* [This tells of the religious life].[52] The theme of

[48] On this contradiction, see Grundmann 1978a.

[49] Kern 1895, 416:34–417:25. In Ls. 25 (Kern 1895, 415:22–417:2) a clear distinction is made between religious who perform labor (lay brothers) and others who lead the contemplative life (monks/nuns).

[50] Kern 1895, 417:3–5.

[51] An example of such an approach is Hugh of St. Victor, who started a program of Bible study for novices in his order, which provided for a thorough study of the literal, historical sense as a basis. Only then did the allegorical, tropological and anagogical meanings follow in turn (cf. Smalley 1952, 83–97).

[52] Frühwald 1963, 106–111.

this sermon reads *Illa autem quae sursum est Hierusalem libera est quae est mater nostra* ['But that Jerusalem, which is above, is free: which is our mother'; Gal. 4:26). The author derives four meanings of the term 'Jerusalem': *Nu suldi mercken vir denc. Derste es dasse hoge ligt, ende es oec dar ombe seker. Dander es dasse vritsam es. Terde es dasse vri es. Dat virde es dasse onse muder es* ['Now you shall take note of four things. The first is that it is high, and is therefore secure. The second is that it is peaceful. The third is that it is free. The fourth is that it is our mother'].[53] According to Frühwald, this division is related to the fourfold method of interpretation, in which 'Jerusalem' was the classic example: historically it was the city of the Jews, allegorically the Church, tropologically the Christian soul and anagogically the heavenly city of God. In Ls. 13 the meaning 'high and secure' would stand for the historical sense, 'peaceful' for the allegorical, 'free' for the tropological and 'mother' for the anagogical sense. The argument is less than compelling, however: the passage is too brief to be convincing and moreover the author makes no mention whatsoever of the exegetical levels.

An interesting adaptation in Ls. 13 (Rd. 54) is that the tropological (?) meaning does not apply to the status of the individual soul, but to the monastic community as a whole. To lend his argument rhetorical force, the author cites a long passage from Bernard in which the monastic community is compared to the heavenly Jerusalem. This slight deviation in *Dit sprict van gesteleken levene* underscores even more the particular perspective of the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons*. These texts were intended to raise the spiritual level in religious communities, and not to provide an introduction to Bible study for *illiterati*. The *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* offer spiritual sustenance for those who led the contemplative life, but were not themselves *pfaffen*, because they were either women or uneducated. Scripture was explained to them with an eye to their special needs as religious, but no discussions for the professional theologian take place here.

This conclusion should not, however, lead us to underestimate the stature of the *Limburg sermons*. Ls. 15 (Rd. 56), for example, offers a consideration of several aspects of mystical theology, without, however, providing a description of the divine experience in the process (see § 1.3 and 4.3). The author of Ls. 43 does take that decisive step, though his sermon may strike us as somewhat simpler by virtue of its concrete,

[53] Kern 1895, 309:16–18.

image-rich language surrounding the king and his wine cellar. The tried and true medium of allegory is employed here to render difficult material more comprehensible. Ultimately *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* is all about the meaning of the second, more abstract part of the protheme: [*hi*] *ordinerde in mi die caritate, dats die sute minne* [(he) installed in me *caritas*, that is sweet *minne*]. The image of the king in his wine cellar is used to clarify that Christ instills divine love in some of the elect. Using the image of the five 'lactuaries', he renders a number of facets of all-encompassing *minne* concrete. Thus *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* describes in a plastic, allegorical way nothing less than the encounter with God.[54]

According to some medieval scholars the 'allegory of the poets' and the 'allegory of the theologians' are in principal mutually exclusive. The theologian is after all seeking the absolute meaning in created reality hidden by God, whereas the poet uses a self-made image to express human meaning.[55] This does nothing to diminish how as a literary work *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* impresses by virtue of the skill and originality with which it was written. The author may indeed be working first and foremost as a theologian, but the moment he sets his pen in motion he is also an author. The lively manner in which the author of Ls. 43 evokes the image of a richly stocked wine cellar with a horde of servants is in a sense an indication of his literary skill. In particular his use of personified virtues as servants is noteworthy from the perspective of 'allegory of the poet'. The author of Ls. 43's point of departure is the figural sense of a biblical concept, but in the course of his treatment of it he would appear to be as much a poet as he is theologian. In an associative process whereby he makes ample use of contemporary knowledge about customs life at court, he paints an entirely new picture that differs markedly from the Bible. But there is nothing to be seen to which no figurative meaning might be attached.

We find the same kind of poetic (?) license in *Dbuec van den boegaerde* [The Book of the Orchard] (Ls. 39). Therein is created an orchard, based on the description of the garden of love in the Song of Songs, in which all manner of allegorical characters appear. The appear-

[54] On the meaning of Ls. 43 in this context, see also Faesen 2000, 141–143.

[55] On the mutual connections between the two paradigms, see e.g. Ohly 1977, 12–13, Vekeman 1976, 226–232 and Freytag 1982, 15–17.

ance of one or more keepers has a biblical basis, for these characters are indeed mentioned in the *Canticum canticorum*. But that he awakens the lovers by tickling them with a feather, as happens in *Dbuec van den boegaerde* (Ls. 39), has no connection whatsoever to the biblical text. Presumably at this point there is an interference with a literary tradition that has roots in Antiquity and that at any rate has nothing to do with the allegorical interpretation of the Bible. It is especially in these two interpolated *Limburg sermons* that the imagery of the mystic wine cellar and the garden of love are extended to great lengths. In the *St. Georgen sermons* this new creative, associative method is not as prominent. The authors of the Middle High German sermons remain on the whole closer to the biblical text and its allegorical meaning.

The position occupied by the *Limburg sermons* in this respect is put into somewhat more perspective when we bring the *Boec der minnen* into the discussion. This originally Nether-Rhinish text also constitutes an introduction to the contemplative life that makes ample use of allegory. There we read, unsurprisingly, the following lines about the highest goal of the religious life:

> Contemplacio heet een gheestelijc zyen dat dye ziele hevet alze zi al hare zinnen verzamelt an dat marken van eenre zake te gheesteliker wijs, alz men een breet water te zamen drivet alzoe dat het up eene water mole al te male ga. Of als een mensche dye springhen zoude ende een langhe wijt cleet an hadde. Wilde hi zeere springhen, hi zamende dat cleet al omme te hem ende spronghe dan enen groeten spronc. Aldus důt oec dye contempleren wille. Al hare zinnen dye ut gespredet waren te verganghelikeN dinghen dye trecket zi in ende springhet eenen groete spronc ende enen zalighen in den boemgard of in den wijnkelr des zůte brudecomen Jhesus.[56]
>
> [*Contemplacio* is the state of being of a soul when she has mustered all of her senses to consider something in a religious sense, just as men divert a wide river such that it powers a watermill. Or as someone who wishes to leap, but wears a broad garment. If he wants to jump high, then he gathers his clothes for a great leap. Thus do those who wish to contemplate. They gather together all of their senses that were spread out among transitory things and they take a great leap, and a blessed one, into the garden or the wine cellar of the sweet Bridegroom Jesus.]

He who would ascend to contemplation must rid himself of all earthly concerns, in order then to take the plunge into the iconographic world

[56] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 3:23–32.

of the Song of Songs. While *Dbuec van den boegaerde* and *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* take pains to describe the garden of love and the spiritual wine cellar in as plastic a way as possible, the *Boec der minnen* merely touches upon these two great iconographic complexes of bridal mysticism. The author and his audience were apparently so familiar with these traditional images that they had practically devolved into clichés. Had the secret power of Song of Songs imagery passed its zenith?

Precisely by virtue of his use of imagery, the author of *Die Lilie* and the *Buch der Minne* occupies a plane of fracture, as Kurt Ruh remarks with reference to this very quotation. Although the *Buch der Minne* proceeds for the most part in a traditional fashion, at precisely this juncture, when the difficult concept of contemplation must be explained, the author employs metaphors drawn from everyday life. The imagery of the reservoir for the watermill and the wide garments do not occur in the Bible. In almost poetic fashion, the author is here seen to be looking for appealing practical to support his message. The use of imagery based on the reality of everyday life would be fully developed only in the fourteenth century by the preachers of the mendicant orders.[57]

Whoever looks for them will find in the *Limburg sermons* examples of imagery that are more likely to have been derived from reality than from the Bible. The garden sermon Ls. 46, for example, contains a passage in which it is explained how Christ likes to refresh himself on the lilies of virginity. This forms the occasion for a long drawn out passage on the way in which virgins ought to feed him. There we encounter the following phrase: *Ende welc mensche werc dut van geregtecheide ende van ontfermecheide, ic seghe u dat hi Gode vuet. Ende bi dien sin degene seleg di hem smorgens geven tontbitene ende zavonts te supperne*. ['And whoever does deeds of righteousness and compassion, I say to you he feeds God. And therefore they are blessed who provide him with breakfast in the morning and supper in the evening].[58] The reference to breakfast and dinner is certainly original and has no basis in the Bible. In a sense the same thing occurs in our sample text Ls. 43, where the images of king and wine cellar are embellished with imagery from the real world. The difference between that and the reservoir and the robe in the *Buch der Minne* is at most that the realistic metaphors employed in Ls. 39, Ls. 43 and Ls. 46 and some of the other *Limburg sermons* stem from extended

[57] Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, p. 237.
[58] Kern 1895:630,13–16.

association on a biblical image.[59] In this sense the *Limburg sermons* are still somewhat closer to allegorical biblical exegesis, whereas the *Buch der Minne* has already moved somewhat further away from it.

In his study of medieval garden imagery, Dietrich Schmidtke suggests that within religious literature we distinguish a genre he calls 'dingallegorische' [object-allegorical] literature. To this category belong those texts in which the allegorization of an object is the most significant structural feature. Schmidtke wants to demarcate this genre from the other forms of 'personifikationsallegorische' literature.[60] For practical reasons he limits himself to a in-depth study of garden allegory, which constitutes a sub-category of 'dingallegorische' literature. Most of the material he surveys dates to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but he includes a few older garden allegories. Among these is a portion of a *Sankt Georgener Predigt*, namely the second part of Rd. 60 (Ls. 31), and one *Limburg sermon*, namely Ls. 39 (in which incidentally personifications also occur).[61] Schmidtke labels this literary category more generally 'dingallegorische Erbauungsliteratur' [object-allegorical edifying literature]. *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* is supposed to belong to this category, for its framework is comprised of two objects drawn from the Bible. Yet in my view we would be doing this and other *Limburg sermons* an injustice if we classify them solely as 'Erbauungsliteratur' or edifying literature. In texts such as Ls. 31, Ls. 39 and Ls. 43 there is more to it than that.

An observation made by Beryl Smalley about Richard of St. Victor and his relationship with the Bible comes to mind. In the Victorine tradition, which placed great emphasis on the literal sense of scripture as the basis for exegesis, he was someone who paid particular attention

[59] That the translator of the *LS* was not entirely blind to the employment of useful images from reality appears from a passage in Rd. 53, in which God is compared to a carpenter: God is not to be equated with his creation in the same way that a carpenter is not to be equated with his building. In the translation, Ls. 12, the translator adds two examples of such buildings: *een hus ogte ene molen* [a house and a mill] (Kern 1895, 302:13). In this context we should probably also mention the famous comparison of the loving soul to a fish and a bird in Ls. 42 (Kern 1895, 577:29–34), images that are similarly non-biblical. Mens 1947, 189 points out that both motifs are also found in Mechtild von Hackeborn and Mechtild von Magdeburg.

[60] Schmidtke 1982, 2–4, especially n. 5.

[61] Schmidtke 1982, no. 9 (pp. 34–35) is the second part of Rd. 60/Ls. 31, and no. 12 (pp. 37–38) is the *Kleine mndl. Baumgarten*, Redaktion II, or Ls. 39.

to the *sensus spiritualis* or *mysticus*.[62] According to Smalley, Richard eagerly allowed himself to be overwhelmed by the beauty of biblical language. 'What attracted him in the letter of the Scripture was not the movement of human history but the jewels, the songs, and the flowers. The sound of the luxurious oriental metaphors in the Canticle enchanted him, though the literal meaning struck him as so much nonsense'.[63] I assume that the primary audience of Ls. 43 and the other *Limburg sermons* did not hold an independent opinion on the literal meaning of the Canticle. But it seems clear that they were fascinated by the imagery in this mysterious book. Their greatest preference was for images from nature, which incidentally were not drawn exclusively from the Song of Songs. The *Limburg sermons* are not alone in their use and allegorization of biological imagery.[64] It occurs in abundance in the *St. Georgen sermons*, but in the Middle Dutch translation the phenomenon is more prominent. This is shown, for example, in a passage from Ls. 28 (Rd. 63), where God's creation is explained in brief. Where the Middle High German text merely mentions a few created things, like the sun, the moon and the stars, the Middle Dutch thought it useful to add among other things foliage, grass, fish and birds.[65]

Franz-Josef Schweitzer has pointed out that various thirteenth-century vernacular mystical texts make use of what he calls 'organic imagery in the style of the Song of Songs' when they wish to describe a state of inner perfection (for examples see § 2.3). According to him these motifs were especially popular in circles of Beguines and Beghards, who in the course of the thirteenth century would be suspected of heresy.[66] Such organic imagery was used in order to illustrate that God and man could become equal, a claim that could not fail to arouse the suspicion of church authorities. Could the prominent presence of nature imagery

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[62] Cf. McGinn 1991–…, vol. 2, 398–418 concerning Richard's attitude toward the figural sense of the Bible.

[63] Smalley 1952, 107.

[64] Thirteenth-century vernacular religious literature is dominated by biological imagery, as titles like the *Baumgart geistlicher Herzen*, *Die Lilie* or *Die drei Blumen des Paradieses* demonstrate. In the *Rheinische Marienlob* Mary is described among other ways as an enclosed garden containing birds and flowers in a way that is reminiscent of Ls. 31 or Ls. 46 (Bach 1934, 7:173–12:348; cf. Fleischer 1976, 108–115). Hadewijch's first vision also features a garden with seven trees (Dros & Willaert 1996, 32:1–42:213; for more background, see Reynaert 1981, 278–283).

[65] Kern 1895, 428:1–6; cf. G, f. 101ra.

[66] Schweitzer 1992, especially 238–239 and Schweitzer 2000, especially 325–330; cf. § 2.3.

in *Limburg sermons* also have something to do with a longing for inner rest and its faint fragrance of heresy? It seems almost impossible. The *Limburg sermons* are monastically oriented and there are no obvious traces of heterodoxy. And yet: in especially some of the interpolated Middle Dutch sermons there is a glimmer now and then of a conflict over the possibility of an encounter between God and man in the terrestrial life (see § 4.3). It may well be that the uneducated had a tendency to abandon the canonical frameworks of allegorical exegesis and to give the interpretation of these (nature) allegories their own less-than orthodox twist.

3.4 *Damsels of Jerusalem*

Once the author of *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* has presented himself as a herald of Christ, he refers once again to the theme of his sermon:

> Dese materie die wi hir te handen hebben, sprac die brut—dats die heilege sile—totten joncfrouwen van Jherusalem—dats ten genen die noch jonc sin in gehorsamheit ende nit en hebben gesmact der suter wendelingen hars brudegoms, ons heren Jhesus Christus.[67]
>
> [The matter that we have in hand here, was spoken by the Bride—that is, the sacred soul—to the damsels of Jerusalem—that is, to those who are yet young in obedience and have not yet experienced the embrace of their bridegroom, our Lord Jesus Christ.]

The author here links all three figures that have speaking roles in the Song of Songs, namely the bridegroom, the bride and the damsels of Jerusalem. The explanation of the bridal pair hardly needs further explication: the bridegroom stands for Christ and the bride is the sacred soul. The 'damsels of Jerusalem' demand somewhat more attention for, as is soon apparent, they stand for the audience of this sermon. The damsels represent those who are inexperienced in spiritual obedience and who have not yet experienced the encounter with the Bridegroom. The audience of *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* are thus invited to participate in a role play based on the Song of Songs, in which they themselves can identify with the damsels of Jerusalem. But in the end

[67] Kern 1895, 583:30–34.

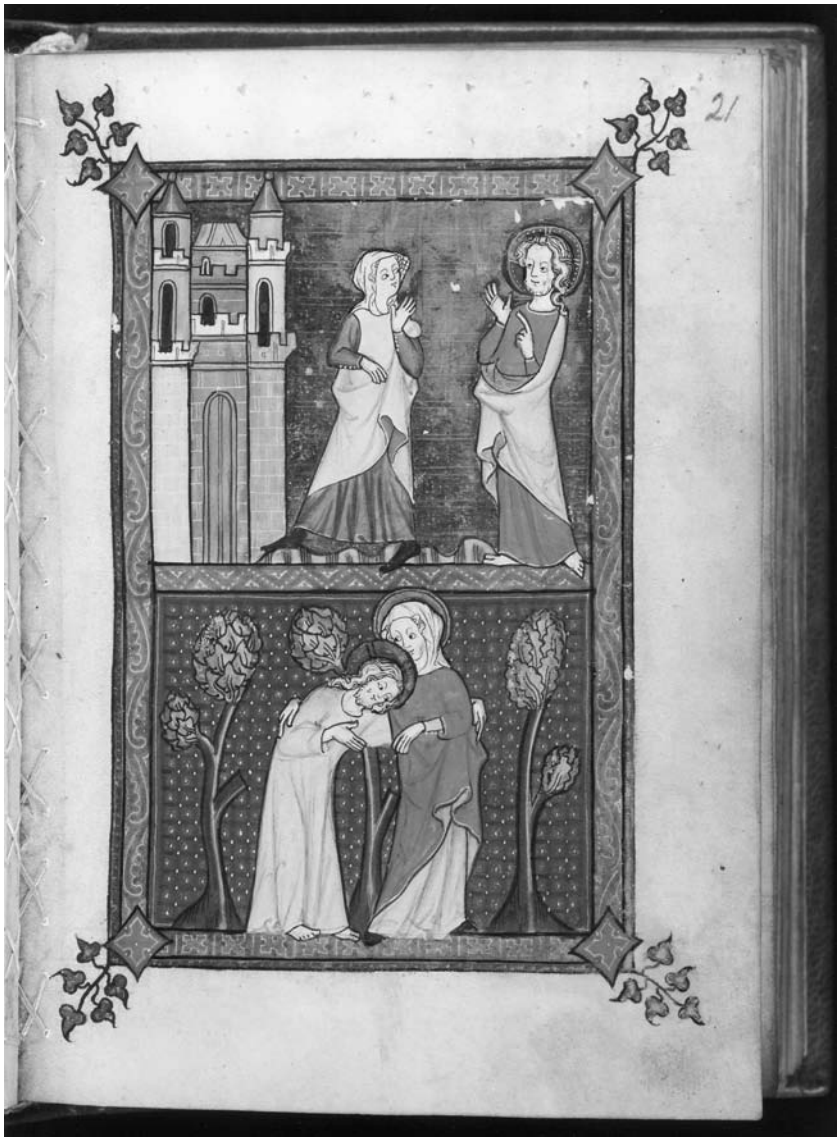

Fig. 18. MS New Haven, Beinecke Rare Manuscript Library, MS. 404, f. 21r. Christ meets his bride.

it is the bride who teaches the damsels their lesson; she is the real role model in Ls. 43.

The primary audience of the *Limburg sermons* appears to be entirely familiar with characters from the Canticle, which is apparent enough from the subtle game being played out in *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre*. The *Cantica canticorum* was traditionally regarded as one of the books of the Bible most difficult to explicate.[68] The undisguised erotic allusions and the steamy language were almost impossible to reconcile with the canonical status enjoyed by the Song of Songs. Unless, that is, the text was interpreted as an indirect and ambiguous description of the relationship between God and mankind. The Egyptian theologian Origen (†254) was the first to read the Canticle as an *epithalamium*, a bridal song in a dramatic style that describes the love relationship between man and wife. The deeper meaning that lay below the surface of the literary form was in his view related to contemplation of the encounter between God and man. Given the delicate nature of the subject, Origin felt that any intensive contact with the *Canticum canticorum* ought to be reserved only for those able to digest meat and no longer limited to milk (1 Cor. 3:2).[69]

The Middle Ages produced a flood of commentaries and interpretations in which the Canticle is read as a mystical bridal song.[70] According to the standard interpretation the bridegroom was the personification for Christ, or alternatively God. There was more debate concerning the role of the bride: the most prevalent readings were the bride as the Church, the bride as Mary and the bride as the human soul. There are other interpretations—see for example the *Vita Julianae*, were the Song of Songs is seen as a bridal song between Christ and the Church or the Word and the Soul.[71] (It was incidentally not unusual for different readings to be used side-by-side.) The twelfth century is considered the heyday of medieval Canticle exegesis. This flourishing took place mainly in monastic circles, where discussion of contemplation were naturally

[68] A survey of the views of medieval theologians concerning the Canticle as a literary work is provided by Minnis 1984, 42–58.

[69] For more on Origen and the Canticle, see Matter 1990, 20–31.

[70] A great deal has been published on the exegesis of the Song of Songs during the Middle Ages. I would mention here Ohly 1958, who discusses the development of Canticle commentaries to about 1200, Matter 1990, who considers medieval Canticle commentaries to be a independent genre, and Kingma 1993, who distills the religious ideals of medieval monks from twelfth-century commentaries on the Song of Songs.

[71] *AASS*, Aprilis I (5 April), 445; cited at § 3.5.

most relevant. By far the most influential commentary on the Song of Songs from this period is comprised by Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermones super Cantica canticorum*.[72] He applies the mysterious text of this biblical book, so charged with emotions, to the spirituality of the Cistercian monk, the essence of whom is *caritas*—non-physical love. Bernard reads the Song of Songs as a text that gives expression to the loving relationship between Christ and the contemplative soul. In his interpretation he emphasizes in particular the allegorical meaning of the *Canticum canticorum*, that is to say: the meaning of this book within the Christian faith. In his commentary, Bernard's friend and kindred soul William of St. Thierry (†1148/49) placed a greater emphasis on the moral interpretation.[73]

Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre fits nicely into this tradition pioneered by the Cistercians. The 'role play' cited above appears to be an echo of a passage from William's *Expositio super Cantica canticorum*, in which it is explained that the Song of Songs is a song in dramatic style with four discernible parts.[74] The fourth part, the companions of the bridegroom symbolizing the angels. is not worked out in Ls. 43, but the other three are interpreted in a comparable fashion. Thus William characterizes the 'damsels of Jerusalem' as young and gentle souls who have devoted themselves to spiritual love and who submit to the bride in humble obedience in order to become perfect souls.[75] In most of the *Limburg sermons* in which the bride from the Canticle appears she stands for the perfected soul (see especially Ls. 31, Ls. 39 and Ls. 45). But there is an exception to the rule: in Ls. 46, *Dets wie onse vrouwe een besloten boemgart es* [This is How our Lady is an Enclosed Garden] phrases taken from the Song of Songs concerning the bride are applied to the Mother of God.

The utter naturalness with which in *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* the Canticle functions as a frame of reference says a lot about the mental world of the intended audience of the *Limburg sermons*. Frühwald rightly observes that Canticle exegesis is one of the main pillars upon which *St. Georgen sermons* rest, but in the *Limburg sermons* this aspect is even more

[72] Cf. e.g. Ohly 1958, 136–158 and Matter 1990, 123–150.

[73] Cf. Minnis 1984, 48.

[74] Ed. Déchanet & Dumontier 1962, 80–82 (ch. 8), with a French translation; see Minnis 1984, 57 for an English translation).

[75] *Porro adolescentulae sunt tenerae ac novellae animae, quae in disciplinam ac professionem spiritualis amoris, datis nominibus, humilitatis obsequiis, et imitationis studio, Sponsae, id est perfectioribus, gaudent adhaerere* (Déchanet & Dumontier 1962, 82).

strongly emphasized.[76] The themes of the sermons alone demonstrate this. Of the 39 Middle High German sermons that is only one that takes its theme from the Song of Songs, namely Rd. 60 (Ls. 31). This is precisely the text that in manuscript H is called the 'best in the book'. Of the interpolated *Limburg sermons*, both our sample text Ls. 43 and Ls. 45 are styled directly after the Song of Songs. Further, a nearly direct line can be traced from both 'orchard sermons' to the Canticle. *Dets wie onse vrouwe een besloten boegaert es* (Ls. 46) takes a Marian antiphon as its theme, but it consists almost entirely of phrases from the Song of Songs. *Dbuec van den boegaerde* (Ls. 39) is strictly speaking not a sermon at all, which is evident enough from its lack of theme. But in its chosen subject matter and imagery—the garden of love and the bed of love—it dovetails very nicely with the Song of Songs.

These *Limburg sermons* constitute the oldest extant witnesses to the Middle Dutch reception of the Canticle, together with the more or less contemporary translation of the *Buch der Minne*.[77] The ease with which these sources handle the complex of images from the *Canticum canticorum* begs the question of whether Middle Dutch translations or paraphrases were in circulation at the time, from which those who had no Latin became familiar with its contents. The oldest known Canticle commentary in Middle Dutch glosses the text verse by verse and in the process provides an nearly complete translation in rhyming couplets. One manuscript fragment survives from ca. 1350, while the only more or less complete manuscript dates from the period 1375–1400.[78] The origin of this—rhyming—Canticle commentary may well predate the extant witnesses somewhat, but it is doubtful whether it may be thought to extend as far back as the thirteenth century. The oldest extant continuous prose commentary of the *Canticum canticorum* is credited to the so-called Bible Translator of 1360 and is dated after 1384.[79] The further development of the Song of Songs in Middle Dutch religious

[76] Frühwald 1963, 139.

[77] Hadewijch, whose imagery is closely allied with the Canticle, rarely refers directly to this biblical text (Reynaert 1981, 411).

[78] For more on this, the oldest of the MDu. Canticle commentaries, see Hap 1975, volume 2 of which contains an edition, as well as Schepers 1999, vol. 1, 27–32. The oldest manuscript is the fragment Leiden, UB, Ltk. 227 (Hap 1975, vol. 1, 87–95), and the only other manuscript is currently preserved in two parts (Berlin, SPK, mgf 613 and Wiesbaden, Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, A 148) and contains most of the text (Hap 1975, vol. 1, 13–49).

[79] For more on the Bible Translator of 1360 and the dating of his works, see Kors 2000 (especially 252) and Kors 2007. Cf. Kwakkel 2002a, 139–140 (table 8).

literature was not to reach its highpoint until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[80]

There are then no direct indications for the existence of a Middle Dutch translation of the Song of Songs from the late thirteenth century, though the opposite cannot be proven, either. But there existed at the very least a small body of literature concerning the biblical bridal song. The second part of Ls. 41 is comprised of the Middle Dutch adaptation of a chapter from the *Explicatio in Cantica canticorum* (see § 2.7). Given that the same chapter appears in a slightly variant form in the first Letter of Hadewijch, there is reason to assume that this chapter, at least, enjoyed a wider dissemination. Whether or not there existed a translation of the *Explicatio* in its entirety remains an open question, though it is not very likely. The first half of Ls. 39 had a separate tradition under the title *Boengaert van der geesteleker herten* [Orchard of the Spiritual Heart], this time in the form of a letter (see § 2.5). Toward the end of the thirteenth century there were thus somewhat shorter Middle Dutch adaptations of the Canticle in circulation, even beyond the circles in which the *Limburg sermons* were composed. The compiler of the *Limburg sermons* was the first to put together a collection of this kind of material.

From a chronological perspective, at least, the Dutch-speaking region is behind when it comes to an independent tradition of Canticle literature. Already in the eleventh century the Bavarian abbott Williram von Ebersberg (†1085) had completed his *Expositio in Canticis canticorum*.[81] In this work the Vulgate text of the Song of Songs, a basic commentary and the Old High German text are placed side-by-side. Presumably the 'Williram' functioned as a textbook to help initiate novices in the spiritual foundations of their contemplative life. A copy of this three-volume work had reached the Northern (!) Netherlands already in 1100, ending up at the Benedictine abbey of St. Adelbert at Egmond. The 'Leiden *Willeram*', as this manuscript is usually referred to, had as far as we know no further influence on Middle Dutch literature.[82]

Williram's translation of the Song of Songs formed in turn the basis for the *Sankt Trudperter Hohelied*, that was written in the twelfth century for a circle of female Benedictines. Passages from this Middle High

[80] See the survey by Schepers 1999, vol. 1, 21–41.
[81] Ed. Bartelmez 1967; cf. e.g. Ohly 1958, 98–102.
[82] Ed. Sanders 1971; cf. among others Van Oostrom 1993, Gumbert 1997, 160–161 and Van Oostrom 2006, 30–33.

German commentary were incorporated into Rd. 60, that is the SG redaction of the Palm Tree treatise (see § 2.3). Via that route, then, the *St. Georgen sermons* collection is linked to a very old tradition of Canticle commentaries in German. This is in a derivative sense also the case for Ls. 31, though in that text little remains of the splendid 'Kunstprosa' of the *Sankt Trudperter Hohelied*.

In the Old French-speaking regions, as well, texts inspired by the *Cantica canticorum* were composed at an early date. This happened especially in northern France, where Canticle exegesis in Latin had reached its pinnacle. The most important representative of the vernacular movement is the Canticle paraphrase by Landeric of Wabban (Landri de Waben), composed between 1176 and 1181.[83] Unlike the German texts described above, this Picardian text was apparently not exclusively intended for religious living the contemplative life; the person who commissioned it was at any rate count Baldwin II of Guines. It is suspected that the contested book for which the Cistercians scoured their monasteries ca. 1200 in order to destroy it was none other that Landeric's Canticle adaptation. His interpretation of this biblical book was considered too erotic.[84] The Old French *Le palmier* (the E redaction of the Palm Tree treatise), probably of Picardian provenance, as well, is not really a commentary on the Song of Songs, but rather one of the oldest vernacular texts into which the *Canticum canticorum* has been woven. This text, too, having first made a detour via the *St. Georgen sermons*, is represented in Ls. 31.

It would be an exaggeration to claim, based on these tenuous textual connections, that the German, French and somewhat later Dutch Canticle traditions all flow together in the *Limburg sermons*. The evidence is too vague to sustain such a claim. It is possible to assert that the *Canticum canticorum* was of consummate importance for the spiritual 'Selbstverständnis' [selfunderstanding] of the circle for which the *Limburg sermons* were written. We can describe the author and audience of *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* and the other *Limburg sermons* as members of a 'textual community' for whom the bridal mysticism of the Song of Songs formed the basis. This term was introduced by Brian Stock to describe the phenomenon of how medieval religious communities, both orthodox as well as heterodox, derived their collective religious

[83] Ed. Pickford 1974; cf. Ohly 1958, 280–302 and Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 53–62.
[84] Ohly 1958, 302; cf. Reynaert 1994, 215–216 and Schepers 1999, vol. 1, 21.

identity from a certain text.[85] Bernard of Clairvaux may be regarded as the founder of the 'textual community' in question, because it was he who began to read the Song of Songs in a new way, namely as a treatment of the loving relationship between God and the contemplative soul.

This is not to say that *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* and the *Limburg sermons* derive *linea recta* from the Cistercian school. By the end of the thirteenth century this interpretation of the Song of Songs as a discourse about the mystical marriage between man and God had spread to well beyond the borders of that order. At the same time, the circle of people who considered the bridal mystic ideal to be applicable to themselves had expanded. In his first sermon on the *Canticum canticorum* Bernard of Clairvaux explains for whom he is writing his commentaries. Using Paul's familiar food metaphor (and with Origen in mind) he posits that he will not offer his well-trained listeners milk, as Paul was compelled to do with his new congregation of the Corinthians, but instead present them with meat. Bernard wrote his Canticle commentary expressly for his fellow monks, who like him were well-versed in theology and steeped in the contemplative life. They are invited to think along with him and especially to contribute their own experiences. Novices, however, are excluded from the audience of the *Sermones super Cantica canticorum*, let alone that this high form of spirituality would ever have been wasted on Cistercian lay-brethren.[86]

The author of *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* addresses his sermon to an advanced audience, as well, who rightly expect *groter wisheide* from him. He addresses his audience as beginners on the mystical path, but employs the by now familiar Pauline imagery in order to clarify this *Limburg sermon* is also meant for the advanced (see § 3.2). The meat in the sermon is meant for an audience that strives for an intimate relationship with the Bridegroom. The references to the secret whisperings in Ls. 45 can hardly be interpreted in any other way (see § 2.11). The main contrast with Bernard's Canticle sermons is however that the target audience of the *Limburg sermons* consists of *illitterati*, however far advanced they may be in spiritual terms, whereas Bernard preached for literate brethren who could pass independent judgment on the

[85] Stock 1983, 88–240.

[86] Leclercq, Talbot & Rochais 1957–1977, vol. 1. *Sermo* I (pp. 5–8), especially chs. I and VI; an English translation is provided in *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Song of Songs* 1971–1980, vol. 1, 1–7.

theological status of his interpretations. In the period during which the *Limburg sermons* were composed, a category of illiterate religious had been constituted who were drawn to bridal mysticism. No doubt many nuns belonged to this group, who at least practiced the traditional contemplative lifestyle. But there were also the semi-religious—among whom perhaps the readers of manuscript H may be counted—who sought to emulate this typically monastic ideal. The mystical marriage of Christ and the soul thus became a spiritual guideline for less elite circles, as well.

This sober-minded conclusion after the fact does not imply that these new audiences were any less likely to devote themselves to the mystical marriage. As the *Limburg sermons* demonstrate in numerous passages, this book of the Bible provided them with a language they could use to express their personal relationship with Christ, the God incarnate. The colorful language with its exotic imagery provided many opportunities for a free exegesis in the old allegorical tradition. Precisely the ambiguous meaning of this already mysterious book of the Bible must have had a tremendous appeal. Nevertheless, many of these readers of the Canticle were apparently not able to read the text themselves. For this they depended chiefly on other religious mentors. In *Limburg sermons* such as Ls. 43 and Ls. 45 these religious play a game with their audience. Using the Song of Song they weave a web of meaning in which a communal spirituality is expressed and reinforced.

Perhaps the game being played with meanings in these *Limburg sermons* should be understood from what Niklaus Largier has termed 'allegorical theology'. In an exploratory study he attempts to synthesize the literary works of the Beguine authors Hadewijch, Mechtild von Magdeburg and Margaretha Porete to a common denominator.[87] Largier takes the Visions of Hadewijch as his test case, which he assumes were written for a small group of like-minded women, and he demonstrates how in such a group a fascinating way of playing with meanings could have developed. Hadewijch constructs her Visions with the aid of biblical metaphors and allegories that are drawn primarily from the Song of Songs and the Apocalypse. Additionally she searches for connections with the liturgy, in which salvation history is relived daily in a ritual

[87] Largier 2000, especially 99–106.

fashion.[88] In the Visions Hadewijch herself appears as the main character in the drama of salvation history. In this way she takes the bridal mystic reading of the Song of Songs to its utmost extreme. Largier interprets the Visions as a literary means to render the spiritual meaning of the liturgy concrete. They constitute not so much the reflection of what Hadewijch saw with her inner eye, but are rather deliberately fashioned allegories, that could with some effort be unlocked by the attentive reader, i.e. insiders.[89]

Of course 'allegorical theology' is a modern concept imposed after the fact on a historical situation in which the term was never used. But it can deepen our understanding of that historical situation. It is not entirely clear how Largier imagined allegorical theology would have worked in practice. Was it practiced exclusively by mystic authors like Hadewijch or Mechtild von Magdeburg, or could one also participate passively in 'allegorical theology'? In that case some of the *Limburg sermons* would fit nicely into this scheme, with *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* being one of the most obvious examples. Here it is not the author himself, as is the case of the Visions, in whom salvation history is realized. Rather the text of Ls. 43 is for the most part utter by the 'sacred soul,' who as first-person narrator plays the main role in salvation history. She marries the Bridegroom. This sacred soul functions as a role model for the damsels of Jerusalem, the allegorical form of address for the audience of *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre*. They, too, strive for a union with the Bridegroom. The aspirations of the audience of this *Limburg sermon* seem then on balance not to lie much lower than those of Hadewijch and her circle. And that holds true as well for the author of this mystical sermon, who creatively applied the principles of the allegorical exegesis of the Song of Songs in order to confirm the spiritual identity of a group of religious elect.

[88] Cf. Hubrath 1996, who explicates Mechthild von Hackeborn's *Liber specialis gratiae* in light of the liturgical tasks of the nuns at Helfta.

[89] On the Visions of Hadewijch as allegories see Vekeman 1976; Vekeman is even of the opinion that these texts can be read according to the fourfold method of exegesis.

3.5 Memoria *and Meditation*

Ls. 16 is one of the *Limburg sermons* in which the meaning of preaching is examined in detail (see § 3.2). The author tries to teach his listeners to be independent when it comes to the provision of their spiritual sustenance. The preacher has the following to say about how they should take his words:

> Alsogedan gedagte sulde een igelike seleg mensche hebben, wat hi guts van Gode horde ende van dogeden, dat sulde hi behauden ont heme te staden quame. Ende alse heme dan enech vernoy ogte verdrit tue quame, so sal hi gedencken ane die gude leringe ende ane Gots wort dat hi gehort heft, ende sal heme selver trosten ende helpen in sinen vernoye. Aldus suldi selver backen u broet ende en sult nit altoes ut loepen bidden nog ontlenen broet.[90]
>
> [Every pious person should have such thoughts, (that) whatever good things he hears about God and virtues, he ought to retain them and they will stand him in good stead. And should he be afflicted by any sorrow or sadness, he may then contemplate those good teachings and God's word which he heard before, and he will console himself and assuage his own sorrow. Thus you should bake your own bread and not always have to go out to beg bread of others.]

It is clear that one ought to be self-sufficient and not dependent upon others. But what exactly is meant by the baking of bread? The *Limburg sermons* were written for an audience with a monastic lifestyle. This is borne out, for example, by Ls. 25, in which two kinds of religious are distinguished: those who labor and those who contemplate. The life fulfillment of the latter category is described as follows:

> Die ander lide sin betekent bi Israel. Dassin die himelschouwere, die har herte ende hare begerde op werpen te Gode wert ende Gode ane sien in sinre gotliker schonheit, ende gaen vort tonser vrowen ende dor die negen chore der engele ende dorgaen also himelrike met hare innecheit.[91]
>
> [The second group are symbolized by Israel. They are the contemplators of heaven, who direct their hearts and desire toward God and God's countenance in its divine splendor, and they proceed to Our Lady and the nine choirs of angels and then on to the heavenly kingdom by means of their fervor.]

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[90] Kern 1895, 356:30–357:4.

[91] Kern 1895, 416:20–24. Cf. e.g. Ls. 13 (Rd. 54), where with the aid of Bernard of Clairvaux is explained what contemplation entails (Kern 1895, 310:20–29).

We may safely assume that the *Limburg sermons* were composed especially with these 'contemplators of heaven' in mind, the foundation of whose spiritual lives was the threefold reading and/or prayer-meditation-contemplation. The 'baking of spiritual bread' is an allusion in everyday terms to this activity, so essential for the monastic life.

In her book *The craft of thought* Mary Carruthers describes this process, that proceeds from prayer via meditation to contemplation, as the craft of the medieval monk.[92] During the Middle Ages the estate of those who prayed has as their task to restore the connection with God, which had been lost after the Fall. For the individual monk this meant that in his personal life of prayer he strove for contemplation, that is to say that he desired to be in touch with God and the divine. Generally speaking, however, such moments of bliss were usually preceded by a long process of prayer and meditation in which an attempt was made to focus one's thoughts on a certain aspect of divine truth and to contemplate it as thoroughly as possible. Given the fact that the human mind is by nature rather restless, the monks developed all kinds of techniques to help them focus their attention on the object of meditation and not be distracted by worldly concerns.

For Bernard of Clairvaux it was simply a requirement that a Cistercian monk be able to conduct his spiritual exercises independently. In his *Apologia* to William of St. Thierry he denounces the lazy brethren who in their meditations rely upon the images of painters, sculptors and other artists.[93] A capable monk could draw suitable material from memory at a moment's notice and weave it into a meaningful spiritual exercise leading to contemplation. To do this he has no need for the aids available to the *illiterati*. Carruthers believes that Bernard's well-known criticism of the excessive adornment of churches and monasteries in his time had to do with his view of meditation. He preferred austerely decorated monasteries and churches where monks were not distracted by all kinds of physical representations and images. Sparsely appointed surroundings provided the best conditions for giving shape to one's inner contemplative life.[94]

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[92] Carruthers 1998. One of Carruthers' most important positions is that in its organization of the meditative life monasticism makes abundant use of techniques from classical rhetoric, which were of course adapted to their own uses.

[93] Ed. Leclercq, Rochais & Talbot 1957–1977, vol. 3, 63–108; the chapter in question is XII:28 (pp. 104–107).

[94] Carruthers 1998, 84–87.

From what Bernard says in the *Apologia ad Guillelmum abbati* it follows that it was almost a matter of life and death for a monk to have a good memory. He always had to have good material on hand from which to embark on new meditations. *Memoria* and meditation went hand in hand in the monastic life. The term *memoria* had dual overtones in the Middle Ages which can easily me overlooked by the modern reader. We tend to associate it exclusively with the storage and recall of information, i.e. heuristics. And indeed, medieval monks were capable of prodigious feats of memorization and mnemonics, as Carruthers has demonstrated in another book.[95] But according to Neo-Platonic belief, held by Augustine, among others, *memoria* is also the power of the soul that is capable of remembering its divine origins. Though the bond between God and man has been interrupted, *memoria* makes it possible to restore that relationship in the here and now.[96] This dual function of *memoria* comes fully into its own in the contemplative life of the medieval monk. His memory is a virtual treasure vault in which momentous information concerning God and the divine is stored in such a way that it can be recalled at any moment, if necessary. And when he meditates, with the help of *memoria*, this power of the soul, he renews the bond with his divine origins.

The style in which Bernard wrote his *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* would seem to contradict his plea for austerity. The abbot of Clairvaux makes ample use of lovely images (with much gold and many jewels), adorning his texts with rich ornamentation. This apparent discrepancy is according to Carruthers dispelled in his forty-seventh sermon, in which Bernard explains that a praying monk must inwardly construct for himself a *templum spiritualis*. Contrary to the frugally designed Cistercian monasteries, this inner temple is beautifully appointed and richly decorated.[97] Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons on the Song of Songs were written with the *sancta memoria* in mind and provide as it were the building blocks for such spiritual temples. The beautiful structure of the texts reminds one of the perfection of the divine, which makes it easier for the monks to fix their minds on it. Bernard's eloquent, frequently playful language has the ulterior design of continually stimulating the

[95] Carruthers 1990.

[96] The implications of this Neo-Platonic view of *memoria* are further emphasized in Vance 2000, a review of Carruthers 1998.

[97] Ed. Leclercq, Rochais & Talbot 1957–1977, vol. 2, 56–61; the chapter in question is ch. 3 (p. 57). Cf. further Carruthers 1998, 86–87.

spirit, enabling it to refocus its attention. A splendid and appealing image, an original description or comparison again and again reveal yet another facet of the diamond, which keeps the spirit attentive. The *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* provided the monks of Clairvaux with inspirational material for meditation that they could apply in their own lives of prayer.

For *The craft of thought* Carruthers deliberately chose 1200 as the cut-off point, allowing to restrict her study to a relatively limited corpus of Latin texts that emanated from a relatively closed and uniform elite monastic culture in the Benedictine tradition.[98] After 1200 the landscape of the religious life changed drastically. New orders came into being, with new forms of monastic spirituality, in which women received a conspicuously prominent role. It was especially as a consequence of this that the vernacular partially took the place of Latin. Semi-religious movements arose in which laymen participated, both men and women, who were often in part, at least, eager to pursue the traditional monastic contemplative ideal.[99] All in all this meant that the 'craft of thinking' and the place it held within the monastic life was changed dramatically. That from that moment on amateurs instead of professionals could meddle in this craft was not the least of these changes.

That the old monastic manner of meditation was still practiced amongst the new religious is clear from a passage from the *Vita Julianae virginis*. Juliana of Cornillon—who practiced a variety of religious life-styles during her life, but was never a nun in the Benedictine sense of the word—read all kinds of texts in French and Latin. She developed a special preference for the works of Augustine of Hippo and Bernard of Clairvaux. The sermons on the Song of Songs were especially important for her private life of prayer:

> Quae cum jam omnem scripturam Latinam et Gallicam libere legere didicisset, libros. B. Augustini multo affectu legebat; ipsumque Sanctum plurimum diligebat. Verum quoniam scripta beatissimi Bernardi vehementer sibi ignita visa sunt, et dulciora super mel et favum; ea legebat et amplectebatur devotione multa valde, ipsumque Sanctum, immensae dilectionis privilegio honorabat. Dedit igitur animum suum ad eloquia ejus; et plusquam vigint sermones extremae partis, editos ab eodem super Cantica Canticorum, in quibus ipse Beatissimus humanam scien-

[98] Carruthers 1998, 5.

[99] On the backgrounds to this change in monastic life, see e.g. McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, 1–30.

> tiam visus est excessisse, studiose cordetenus didicit, et firmae memoriae commendavit.[100]
>
> [Yet the writings of the most blessed Bernard seemed to her ablaze with fire and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, so she read and embraced them with the most fervent devotion and honoured that saint with the privilege of a boundless love. Therefore she yielded her mind to his eloquence and learned by heart more than twenty sermons from the last part of his work on the Song of Songs, in which the blessed saint seemed to transcend human knowledge. These she committed firmly to memory. For what should Juliana have read and learned more willingly than the marriage song of Christ and the Church, the Word and the Soul?][101]

Unfortunately we do not know whether the twenty *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* Juliana memorized were written in Latin or Old French. In her day the French translation of the sermons on the Song of Songs were at any rate certainly available in the area around Liège (see § 4.4).

There can be no doubt that the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* were also in one way or another connected to the changes in the religious life that took place during the thirteenth century. We have in the meantime seen that for the readers of the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* contemplation constituted the core of their existence, too. The author of Ls. 16 makes it clear that they need to be able to bake their own bread, i.e. that they must be able to console themselves by recalling words from their memories for contemplation. Thus a memory filled with good thoughts would lead to spiritual rest. But the first readers of the *Limburg sermons* had either no or a very limited ability to consult the Scriptures themselves, as the allegories of the book that appear in Ls. 25 make clear.[102] Preaching pastors who provided material for consideration were of the utmost importance to them. It seems rather obvious, then, to assume that the *Limburg sermons* fulfilled a function in the meditation of its listeners, who after all had little if any ability to read. We have therefore selected *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* as the basis for our study of this issue, while at the same time without losing sight of the other *Limburg sermons* in the process.

In his *De tribus maximis circumstantiis gestorum* [The Three Chief Memory-Fixes for History], a brief treatise on the workings of memory,

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[100] *AASS*, Aprilis I (5 April), 445–446.
[101] Transl. Newman 1999, 33–34.
[102] Kern 1895, 417:3–5; cited at § 3.3.

the great monk/teacher Hugh of St. Victor mentions three systems one can use to store information. One can relate the information to be stored to numbers, to places, and to events.[103] It is especially the first-mentioned mnemonic technique that we find in practically all of the *Limburg sermons*. The main structure of many of the texts is determined by a numerical series. The title of Ls. 30, for example, *Dit sprict van X namen die ane onsen here sin* [This concerns ten names of Our Lord], accurately reflects its contents: ten characteristics of God are explicated using the same number of names for Him. A number of the seven Passion sermons exhibit a comparable structure and bear similar titles, like *Dits van VIII saken dar Got mensche ombe wart* [This concerns seven reasons why God became man—Ls. 32] or *Dits van V saken dar Jhesus Cristus ombe gemartelt wart* [This concerns five reasons why Jesus Christ was martyred—Ls. 34]. Nor should *Det sin seven manieren van minnen* [These are the seven ways of love—Ls. 42] be overlooked in this context. In numerous other texts numerical series constitute important elements of meaning. Thus Ls. 20 contains a series of eight nunly virtues the first letters of which form the word *MULIERES* [women], Ls. 28 lists twelve aspects of God's power and *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne* [This teaches us nine ways of love—Ls. 41] provides not only a series of nine ways of love, but also a series of seven pains of hell. Numerical series are thus one of the most significant constituent elements in the *Limburg sermons*.

Even though its main structure is not determined by it, the sermon on the spiritual wine cellar makes ample use of numerical series. In this text alone dozens of series are found, such as the six attributes of kingship, the four drinks, the three (four) maidservants, the three kinds of *gracie*, the five lactuaries, etc. The composition of such series stems from the allegorizing method whereby a number of characteristics of certain people or things are explicated: the king has six attributes, he is crowned with three crowns, each crown has four gems, etc. In this way complex and abstract theological information can be presented in an orderly and systematic way. This was undoubtedly of great benefit to whoever composed and delivered this sermon, but equally so for those who were expected to internalize its contents. The numerical series no doubt served a mnemonic role in this.[104]

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[103] Ed. Green 1943; Carruthers 1990, 261–266 provides an English translation of this treatise.

[104] This is the point at which its resemblance to the Middle Dutch *sproken* (short tales and legends in verse) suggests itself. Like the sermon, this is an oral genre for which we

In the rhetorical and stylistic entity comprised by the text, the modular structure of *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* is striking, as well. The text may be divided into three parts, namely the six characteristics of God's kingship, the four drinks that are served in his wine cellar, and the five medicines provided by the Bridegroom at the union. These blocks are in turn all composed of smaller units. The passages concerning each of the four drinks are explications in their own right, and further units are to be discerned in them, as well, such as for example the eight spices that sweeten the four drinks and that refer to the Passion of Christ. All of these modules might form the basis for meditative reflection. Seen in this way, *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* is not merely an account describing the encounter in the mystical wine cellar, but also a storehouse of material for a full range of meditative exercises, for example on God's kingship, the suffering of Christ or the mystical encounter.

Bernard of Clairvaux's richness of language in de *Sermones super Cantica canticorum*, which invites further reflection, would appear to some degree to have found a parallel the *Limburg sermons*. The author of *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* makes frequent use of the combination of a concrete image and an abstract one, like for example the royal coin with the human soul, or the five 'lactuaries' with the mystic pleasures. The *Limburg sermons* are interlarded with these kinds of traditional connections, like the violet of humility, the lily of chastity, the rose of passion, the white of Jesus' chastity, the red of the Passion, etc. By means of strong visual images, associations with more difficult to remember abstractions are invoked, such as the implications of monastic virtues or certain specific kinds of theological knowledge. Via images this abstract information could be easily stored in the memory, and then by thinking of the images, recalled. The prevailing fixed connections also help to keep the core aspects of the spirituality of one's own *textual community* constantly in mind.

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possess only the written versions. Hogenelst 1997, vol. 1, 117–118 deals with numerical series in *sproken*. She links the *passie voor poenten* [passion for points] of the tellers of tales to a need to lend order to a world fast becoming less and less orderly. On the other hand this methodology, whereby it is announced ahead of time how many points will follow, is an important help to the audience listening to the tale being performed. This urge for systematization one observes in the MDu. *minnerede* [love prose], a sub-genre of the tale, is incidentally stronger than in their German or French counterparts. In this context Glier 1971, 278 speaks of a typically Dutch *Traktatstil* [treatise style]. An explanation of this phenomenon has not yet been proposed.

The *Limburg sermons*, then, would appear to contain all kinds of formal elements that were of great consequence for memorization and meditation. The fact that Juliana of Cornillon memorized some twenty sermons by Bernard of Clairvaux on the Song of Songs in order to be able to reflect upon them at great length, suggests that preaching could certainly have served that end. Whether the *Limburg sermons* were actually used for meditative reflections is difficult to determine. We know hardly anything about the practical living circumstances of the primary audience of these sermons. Nor is much known about the way in which the *illitterati* nuns, hermitesses, Beguines and Beghards arranged their meditative lives. The fact that Juliana of Cornillon's difficult feat is mentioned in her *vita* is perhaps an indication of just how unusual it was. While Carruthers had an entire library of documents on meditation written by monk-scholars when she wrote *The craft of thought*, we must rely on illiterates for what by chance has been recorded concerning their inner spiritual lives.

One of the sources that does provide a hint is the *Vita Beatricis*. To be sure, this life was also written by a male religious, but its foundation was comprised of autobiographical material written by Beatrijs of Nazareth herself.[105] Amongst them there must have been fairly comprehensive notes concerning her meditations. It even appears as if Beatrijs' authorship was based on the notes that she took prompted directly by her spiritual exercises. According to the *Vita Beatricis* she had discovered early on in her monastic career—she entered the convent probably in 1215—the utility of taking notes as she prayed and meditated.

> <At> quoniam, vt prediximus, ad vacandum singulis, impediente temporis dumtaxat indigentia, prout oportunum fuerat intendere non valebat, ex <illarum qualibet> vnum, quem magis sibi proficuum existimabat, articulum eligens, vt a memoria non excideret, in scriptis hunc redigere consuescebat; et post <hoc> a, in adiutorium inuocata diuina clementia, per singulos temporis portionem partita, nunc hos nunc illos oportunis meditationibus exercebat.[106]
>
> [But since for sheer lack of time, she could not conveniently attend to each of the virtues as she should have, as we said, she used to take one point—whatever she thought more useful—and set it down in writing so it could not slip away from her memory. After this, asking the help

[105] On the *Vita Beatricis* see § 1.5 and 2.8. For Beatrijs' views on *memoria* see also Van Aelst 2001; Ls. 42 is here analyzed as a meditative text.

[106] Reypens 1964, 69,39–70,46.

> of divine mercy, she would divide her time among the individual points and meditate now on some, now on others.][107]

It is in every way likely that the basis for Beatrijs' authorship lay in these meditative notes.[108]

In the chapters of the *Vita Beatricis* that follow this anecdote, the contents of Beatrijs' spiritual exercises are explored in greater detail. It involves more or less fully-fledged meditation exercises and we may assume that they were written by Beatrijs of Nazareth herself. (Van Mierlo even thought he could detect behind these Latin sketches long-lost Middle Dutch originals in the vein of *Van seven manieren van minnen*.)[109] In the *Vita Beatricis* these exercises received such titles as: 'The two cells she established in her heart' (chs. 101–103), 'The five mirrors of her heart' (chs. 105–110), 'The spiritual monastery she established in her heart' (chs. 111–115), 'Humility and obedience: the two guardians of her monastery' (chs. 116–117) or 'The fruitful garden of her heart' (chs. 118–119).[110] The titles of these exercises are themselves reminiscent of the titles of some of the *Limburg sermons*. The practice of such exercises was anything but original. Allegorical meditation schemes such as are described in the *Vita Beatricis* belonged to the standard program of the Cistercian order and Beatrijs will undoubtedly have been inspired by it.[111]

> Let us consider in somewhat more detail on the exercise on the convent of the soul. Beatrijs tried, the *vita* tells us, to dispel her spiritual tepidness by imagining a convent in which God himself was the abbot. Personified virtues occupied the offices. Reason was the abbess, Prudence the sub prioress, Brotherly Love was the cellaress, and supervision of the refectory was entrusted to Austerity and Patience, etc.[112] The arrangement of this convent of the soul resembles that of Lord Selfart in Ls. 44, with the understanding that there the approach is satirical, whereas with Beatrijs that is not the case. In Beatrijs's day there were various convent allegories in circulation, the most important of which was Hugh of Fouilly's *Claustrum animae* [Monastery of the Soul; see § 2.9]. Hugh, however, allegorizes not so much the office holders as he does the convent's building and customs.

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[107] Transl. De Ganck 1991, vol. 1, 113–115.
[108] For more on this, see Scheepsma 2004a.
[109] Reypens & Van Mierlo 1926, 74*; cf. Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 140 n. 5.
[110] Translations of the Latin titles after De Ganck 1991, vol. 1.
[111] Epiney-Burgard & Zum Brunn 1988, 102.
[112] In the *Vita Beatricis* this exercise bears the title *De spirituali monasterio quod in corde suo constituit* (ed. Reypens 1964, 81–83; cf. Vekeman 1993, 88–90 and De Ganck 1991, vol. 1, 136–141).

> In the *Introduxit me rex in cellam vinariam* [The King has Led Me into His Wine Cellar] by John of St. John's at Vineis (see § 2.9), which is based on the *Claustrum animae*, the monastic offices are compared to the powers of the soul, in the context of allegory of the chapter house: *In hoc capitulo intellectus est abbas, ratio prior, fervor religionis subprior* [In this chapter Intellect is the abbot, Reason the prior, Religion the subprior].[113] In a related treatise in which monastic terms are linked to monastic virtues, God apparently plays the role of abbot, as the opening sentence suggests: *In claustro animae deus debet esse abbas* [In the monastery of the soul God is the abbot]].[114] This is again reminiscent of the exercises in the *Vita Beatricis*, but the elaboration of the convent imagery takes a different turn with Beatrijs. Presumably Beatrijs was familiar with the motif of the convent of the soul from literature or oral tradition, but when she embarked on her own life of meditation, she gave this well-known motif her own personal twist.

In the eyes of the clergy Beatrijs, too, was an *illitterata*, but that does not mean that she can serve as the direct model for all illiterate (semi-)religious. She must have been extraordinarily intelligent and correspondingly learned. According to the *Vita Beatricis*, for example, she read books on the Trinity (probably Augustine's *De trinitate*), and we must assume that she did so in Latin.[115] No more than Juliana of Cornillon, Beatrijs of Nazareth was not your average thirteenth-century sister. Her intellectual level was too high, her literary skills too unusual and her inner spiritual life too exceptional. And yet the chapters dealing with her meditations do not give the impression of being too highly aimed.[116] According to her hagiographer Beatrijs had a preference for concrete images, like the keepers of the heart who serve as the point of departure for her spiritual exercises. Based on this she proceeds by means of association to construct an exercise in which on the one hand certain theological considerations, and on the other the ensuing guidelines for a further purification of the soul are accommodated. This is probably how it went in practice with the individual spiritual exercises of religious sisters: one would draw a useful image from tradition and from there develop one's own meditations. The special

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[113] Bauer 1973, 380:52–53.

[114] Ed. Bauer 1973, 311–312 (synoptic edition of three mss.); for the text, see pp. 309–335.

[115] *Nam interdum cum in libris de sancta trinitate confectis, quorum penes se copiam retinebat, id quod inuestigare querebat ingenij viuacitate dliigenter exquiereret* (Reypens 1964, 137:11–13).

[116] It is quite possible that this was the result of the selections made by the author of the *Vita Beatricis* with an eye toward the nuns of Nazareth, for whom he wrote this *vita* (see § 1.5).

thing about Beatrijs of Nazareth's case is not so much the contents of her exercises as the fact that we actually possess a written record of a number of them.

All things considered, Beatrijs' meditative exercises do not differ so very much from (some of the modules in) thirteenth-century sermons. Allegorically interpreted images are used in the *Limburg sermons* as well as conveyers of theological information and providers of moral instruction. Stripped of the typical markers of preaching, such as direct speech, addressing the audience, and the citation of authorities, the *Limburg sermons* look more or less exactly like Beatrijs' meditation exercises. In a certain sense meditation and monastic sermon are two sides of the same coin. The comparison of the *Limburg sermons* and the exercises of Beatrijs of Nazareth also yield interesting points of difference. Beatrijs was famous as a mystic who in her inner life reached the summits of contemplation. Even though her exercises as described in the *Vita Beatricis* are fairly traditional and hardly sensational, we do know that in her meditations she attempted to comprehend the essence of the Trinity. Of the first readers of the *Limburg sermons* we get the impression that they were highly fixated on the mystical marriage. Both of the complexes of imagery derived from the Song of Songs, the garden of love and the wine cellar, were for them by far and away the most important agents of meditative reflection. We can only wonder whether the Middle High German author of Ls. 16 had exactly this in mind when he exhorted the audience of his *Sankt Georgener Predigt* to bake and eat their own bread.

3.6 *Rhyme, Prose and Rhyming Prose*

Like all the other *Limburg sermons*, *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* is a purely prose text. In itself this is a fairly empty observation, given the fact that prose is practically without exception the preferred medium for the medieval sermon. Rhymed sermons do exist—there is a rhymed version of a very popular sermon on Holy Mass by Berthold von Regensburg, for example—but these are exceptions to the rule.[117] Often times rhymed texts are in the first place conscious attempts to

[117] Cf. Kienzle 2000b, 148 n. 14. The most recent treatment of the sermon by Berthold is Bentzinger et al. 2000; for the rhyming version see Pensel 1995.

parody the liturgical sermon, as for instance in the Old French 'sermons joyeux' or the Middle Dutch satirical sermons.[118] Prose is thus the accepted medium for a sermon, and that goes for both Latin and the vernaculars. But even if from the perspective of Christian sermon literature the prose of the *Limburg sermons* is not extraordinary, it most certainly is for Middle Dutch literature. In the thirteenth century verse in rhyming couplets was in that region everywhere the norm, as the impressive oeuvre of the *vader der Dietsche dichteren algader* [the father of all *Dietse* poets] illustrates. As far as we know, Jacob van Maerlant did not write a single word of prose. From the perspective of Dutch literary history, then, the *Limburg sermons*, together with a small handful of other texts, constitute a thirteenth-century novelty. Interestingly enough some of the *St. Georgen sermons* and *Limburg sermons* contain here and there small bits of rhyming text. All the more reason to pause at some greater length to consider the prose of the *Limburg sermons*.

Apart from the relatively isolated case of Hendrik van Veldeke, Middle Dutch literature first began to come into its own in the thirteenth century.[119] This is considerably later than was the case with French, German or English. Nevertheless, that period saw the composition of, among other things, Charlemagne romances, Arthurian romances, oriental romances, beast fables, chronicles, and natural history, all of which is strikingly dependent upon French originals. But whereas in Old French literature verse in rhyming couplets had been replaced by prose already at the beginning of the thirteenth century—metrical verse was then frequently associated with untruthfulness—the transition to prose in Middle Dutch took place much later. The famous *Lanselot-en-prose* was translated into Dutch no fewer than three times in the thirteenth century, two of which were in rhyming couplets.[120] During this same period Maerlant translated the two greatest Latin prose encyclopedias written by Vincent of Beauvais and Thomas of Cantimpré into metrical verse.

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[118] On the 'sermons joyeux' see Koopmans 1988. On the MDu. satirical sermon see Kaijser 1983–1984; data on the individual texts are found in Hogenelst 1997, vol. 2 (R3, R4, R260, R265, R266 and R273). Cf. the remarks by Mertens (in press, a) on the relevance of the parodical sermon for our understanding of the homily.

[119] Van Oostrom 2006 now provides a history of Dutch literature of this period.

[120] We should also note, however, that it is assumed that the MDu. *prose Lancelot* was composed in the thirteenth century; the extant manuscript fragments date to the fourteenth century (Kienhorst 1988, 90–91).

From about the beginning of the fourteenth century we frequently find both prose and metrical versions of the same time existing side by side. Orlanda Lie has studied this phenomenon extensively, concentrating in particular on epics and so-called *artes* texts [didactic texts].[121] In her view, the choice between metrical verse or prose in Middle Dutch literature is determined by a number of reception functions. In principle rhyming verse is meant to be read aloud to an unlettered audience, who is thus instructed by a narrator acting as instructor. Prose is the medium traditionally employed in the educated world of the clerics; Middle Dutch prose therefore implies the existence of an educated audience, one capable of reading the text on its own.[122] In the thirteenth century practically all secular literature in Middle Dutch was composed in rhyming couplets, apparently with an eye toward aural reception by an unlettered audience. What little prose there was circulated exclusively in religious milieus. In the course of the fourteenth century prose began to gain ground especially for religious and 'scientific' writings, on the one hand because the Latin sources had been written in prose, but on the other hand also because it was thought that the message could be more adequately conveyed in prose.[123] To a certain extent, the thirteenth-century *Limburg sermons* fall outside this scheme, at least if manuscript H is to be considered more of a text to be read from aloud than silently. In that case we must assume an unlettered audience that was nevertheless able to process aurally some rather difficult prose. This holds true for the entire Middle Dutch sermon genre: not just vernacular monastic sermons, but lay sermons aimed at illiterates, as well, were normally speaking not composed in verse.

[121] See especially Lie 1994.

[122] Hogenelst 1991 has nuanced this picture somewhat by pointing out that there are diverse MDu. rhyming didactic texts that were clearly intended to be read aloud or performed, but at the same time were aimed at a fairly unschooled audience. It would seem that especially the less well-educated people in the Dutch-speaking areas had a certain preference for the older, verse form.

[123] Lie 1994, 38–47 provides an overview of the thirteenth century from the perspective of the question of whether rhyme is to be associated with mendacity; the fourteenth century is treated on pp. 47–57 (with a few general remarks on pp. 47–48 concerning rhyme and prose in the thirteenth century on that are of some significance in this context). On pp. 37–38 Lie mentions only three prose collections from the thirteenth century, namely the *Nederrijns moraalboek* [Nether-Rhinish book of morals], Hadewijch's oeuvre and the mostly lost works of Beatrice of Nazareth. A more complete overview of thirteenth-century MDu. prose appears further on in this study.

Armed with this basic knowledge we will now attempt to ascertain who the readers of thirteenth-century Middle Dutch religious prose were. In the second half of that century there was an interesting debate being conducted in the versification of Latin prose saints' lives that at the time were being composed in great numbers. In no fewer than three of these texts—Willem van Affligem's *Leven van Lutgart* [Life of Lutgard], Jacob van Maerlant's *Sinte Franciscus leven* [Life of St. Francis], and the anonymous *Vanden levene ons heren* [Concerning the Life of Our Lord]—the authors distance themselves in no uncertain terms from the courtly romances being told everywhere. In the prologue of Book II of the *Leven van Lutgart* Willem asks

> Warumme si so gerne lesen
> Van oude sagen dat gedichte,
> Ende oc geloeven also lichte
> Din logeneren die se tellen.[124]
>
> [Why they so eagerly read the verse of old tales, and so easily believe the lies that they tell]

Instead of the fantasized tales that his audience values so highly, Willem recounts the life's history of someone who actually existed and who moreover led an exemplary life. The more or less contemporary composition of this *vitae* fits into a kind of civilizing or catechetical offensive that manifested itself in the thirteenth century.[125] In the metrical *vitae* described here, heroes like Charlemagne and Roland were as it were replaced by their Christian counterparts. But no matter how harshly Willem and his colleagues criticized the epic poets, they continued to use the verse form employed by them, despite the fact that their contemporaries associated it with falsehood. This was probably a necessary concession to an audience used to listening to rhyming texts.

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[124] *Corpus Gysseling*, vol. II–5, 6:48–51; the entire passage comprises lines 36–62; cf. Spaans & Jongen 1996, 36–37. Similar exclamations are found in the *Sinte Franciscus leven* (Maximilianus 1954, vol. 1, 36:31–52) and *Vanden levene ons heren* (Beuken 1968, vol. 1, 9:5–25; cf. Jongen & Voorwinden 2001, 32:5–25); cf. Lie 1993, 406 n. 31 for more examples of such passages. There is as well a prose text that emphatically distances itself from the secular world, namely *Der grosse Seelentrost* (Schmitt 1959, 1:26–30). This collection of exempla was composed in the middle of the fourteenth century in the western part of the Middle Low German region (Palmer 1992; Schmitt 1959 dates the text to the first half of the century).

[125] For the backgrounds of which see Mulder-Bakker 1997b; the *vitae* mentioned here fall into the third category (defined by her) of saints in their own time (pp. 14–18).

All three of the texts mentioned above are to a certain degree associated with a monastic context. Of *Vanden levene ons heren* we do not know much more than that its oldest textual witness is contained in the Ename codex, also known as the *Oudenaardse rijmboek* [the verse book of Oudenaarde, in Flanders].[126] Two of the—likewise rhyming—saints' lives contained in this manuscript were written by a monk from the Benedictine abbey of Ename (near Oudenaarde). Who commissioned the *Oudenaardse rijmboek* is not known. *Sinte Franciscus leven* is a translation of Bonaventure's *Legenda major*, composed by Jacob van Maerlant at the behest of the brothers minor at Utrecht. It is possible that the Utrecht Franciscans ordered the translation for their own use, but it is more likely that *Sinte Franciscus leven* was employed for pastoral purposes. Quite possibly the text could also have played a role in the education of novices.[127] In his monograph on the text and author of the *Lutgart* Erwin Mantingh argues that it had a plural function. The *Lutgart* contains both a layer aimed at the monks of Affligem and a layer designed to appeal to an (unlettered) audience outside the abbey. Presumably the text was read aloud to them in the guest quarters of Affligem abbey.[128]

All three of the *vitae* under discussion here, then, were composed in a monastic context, but for all three we must also assume the existence of a non-monastic audience, a fact that explains the use of rhyming couplets. In that light, the prose medium of the *Limburg sermons* may be accounted for by the fact that these texts are aimed at people with a monastic lifestyle, even though they were unlettered. But the historical situation is more complicated, because in the second half of the thirteenth century rhyming saints' lives were composed that we know were intended for female religious. The otherwise unknown brother minor Geraert translated and adapted two metrical Latin lives by Thomas of Cantimpré, namely the *Vita Lutgardis* and the *Vita beatae Christinae mirabilis*. Geraert's *Leven van Lutgart* [Life of Lutgard] and *Leven van Kerstine* [Life of Christina] have been preserved in a late thirteenth-century manuscript—unfortunately cut up in the nineteenth century to be used as

[126] Ms. Oudenaarde, Stadsarchief and ms. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce ms. 381 (f. 184). All that remains of this ms. has been edited in *Corpus Gysseling* II–1, 393–500; Jongen & Voorwinden 2001 provides a modern edition with translation of *Vanden levene ons heren*.

[127] On the only manuscript containing *Sinte Franciscus leven* (Leiden, UB, BPL 101) see Maximilianus 1954, 9–29.

[128] Mantingh 2000, 312–319.

bookmarkers—, the remains of which are now kept in Amsterdam.[129] From various indications in the Amsterdam *Lutgart* it appears that the text was intended for the female Benedictine at Mielen, a convent in the vicinity of Sint-Truiden where Lutgard began her monastic career. The *Leven van Kerstine*—Christina Mirabilis also spent a number of years at Mielen—was written at the request of Femine van Hoye, a Benedictine nun at Mielen. Although Mielen was a famous convent, its nuns apparently had difficulty understanding the Latin *vitae* of Thomas. Brother Geraert could have made things easier for himself by translating the Latin prose into Middle Dutch prose, but he didn't. Presumably to his mind the genre of epic narration was organically linked to the medium of metrical verse, despite the fact that the audience he was writing for was not entirely uneducated.

If we take stock of the extant corpus of thirteenth-century Middle Dutch prose, we encounter just one example that does not fall into the category of religious literature. Het *Nederrijns moraalboek* (Nether-Rhinish Book of Morals—MS Hanover, Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, IV 369) contains three texts that have been combined to form a more or less coherent book: William of Conche's *Moralium dogma*, a collection of proverbs, and Richard de Fournival's *Bestiaire d'amour*.[130] All three are translations of Old French prose texts that originated in the northern regions of the French-speaking area. It is assumed that the richly-illuminated manuscript from Hanover was composed for a noble patron, quite possibly count Reinald I of Gelre and Zutphen (1271–1326).[131] With such a non-intellectual audience we might have expected metrical verse, and yet in this case it wasn't considered necessary to versify the original prose. The most important reason for this is most likely the exhortatory nature of all three texts. A narrative text would probably have been set to rhyme, judging by the example of the *Leven van Kerstine*. Perhaps the numerous and splendidly executed illustrations were

[129] Ms. Amsterdam, UB, I G 56 and I G 57; on this manuscript, see *Corpus Gysseling*, vol. II–6, XII–XIII and Hogenelst & Van Oostrom 1995, 44–46 (with illustrations).

[130] Ed. *Corpus Gysseling*, vols. II–6, 355–381, 382–402 and 403–422, respectively. The text of the *Bestiaire* was previously edited in Holmberg 1925, the *Moralium dogma* in Holmberg 1929. On the background of the *Nederrijns moraalboek* see Gerritsen 2003: following De Vooys 1927 and De Vooys 1935 Gerritsen posits that behind the *Nederrijns moraalboek*, in which the three compiled parts have been forged into a single entity, there is a MDu. text, which had been translated into the Lower Rhine dialect in ms. Hanover. See also Beckers 1995, 154–155 and Van Oostrom 2006, 197–203.

[131] Cf. Meuwese 2001, 21.

added to the *Nederrijns moraalboek* by way of compensation. The prologue to this work, actually the prologue to the *Bestiaire d'amour*, stresses at any rate that word and image here fulfill equal roles as conveyors of meaning.[132]

The *Limburg sermons* comprise the largest corpus of thirteenth-century Middle Dutch religious prose. The Middle Dutch translation of the *Boec der minnen* also belongs to this category, given the possibility that The Hague manuscript is dated to the thirteenth century. The *Boec der minnen* is clearly geared toward female religious leading the contemplative life. Further there are the prose works of Hadewijch, namely her Letters and her Visions. There is a general consensus that her oeuvre is to be dated to the middle of the thirteenth century, but the oldest manuscripts date to the second quarter of the fourteenth century (see § 4.2). Beatrijs van Nazareth must have left behind fairly extensive autobiographical writings, which then formed the basis for the *Vita Beatricis*. Nothing has survived, however, of the original materials—unless *Van seven manieren van minnen*, a Latin adaptation of which appears in the *Vita Beatricis*, was indeed written by her. In all four of these cases we are dealing with texts that were written by or for female religious—the only exception being manuscript H.

Furthermore, the significance of the Middle Dutch (partial) Bible translations has not been significantly recognized. Thanks to a meticulous analysis of the surviving manuscript fragments, Erik Kwakkel has been able to determine that all four types of (prose) gospel translations that he distinguishes—synoptic, integral, pericopes, and translations with glosses—can be traced back to the thirteenth century.[133] The pièce de resistance is of course the *Luikse Leven van Jezus* (see § 1.1), which is preserved in a manuscript dating to ca. 1275.[134] The Middle Dutch gospel harmonies are related to the previously produced but now-lost complete translations of the four gospels. Opinions on the use of these splendid text differ. C.C. de Bruin places the *Luikse Leven van Jezus* in the context of a flourishing culture of mystic literature in which lay folk were also included and whereby a natural need arose for translations of the Holy Scriptures.[135] Geert Warnar defends the position that the diatessaron played a pedagogical role in the state schools, i.e. in clerical

[132] *Corpus Gysseling* II–6, 355:12–24.
[133] Kwakkel 1999b.
[134] On the text and the manuscript, see § 1.1.
[135] De Bruin 1935, vol. 1, 155–158 and 225–232.

circles.[136] Theo Coun, on the other hand, champions the claim that the *Luikse Leven van Jezus* played a role in the liturgy, presumably in the chapel of St. John's parish at Sint-Truiden.[137] Given the fragmentary nature of the their transmission, little more can be said about the audience of the other early Middle Dutch gospel translations.

While the transition from metrical verse to prose in secular Middle Dutch literature took place largely in the fourteenth century, and even then reluctantly, in religious literature prose gained a foothold much earlier. Apart from the metrical saints' lives, which really belong in the category of epic poetry, the vanguard of Middle Dutch religious literature was from the outset comprised of prose works. The only serious exception to this is the *Nederrijns moraalboek*. The readers/listeners of early religious literature in Middle Dutch must have been especially motivated, for we are dealing here with material of a considerable, and sometimes even very high, intellectual level. Nevertheless it would appear that at any rate a portion of the intended audience could not read on their own, and had to consume this difficult prose aurally. In principle this audience did not consist of clergy or monks, for they had ready access to the world of religious prose in Latin. We need to search in circles that proximated the religious, but where little if any opportunity for learning Latin and studying theology existed. We end up, then, with nuns, religious sisters, Beguines, Beghards, lay brothers and the like. Though we do not know exactly for whom the *Limburg sermons* and the *Boec der minnen* were written, primary intended audience for both works should be sought in this category. It was primarily women, then, even though they were considered *illitterati*, who were first willing to tackle the more technical and abstract, yet also more adequate, prose. They were also almost forced to make a big leap if they truly wished to take part in the Christian literary tradition, which was after all dominated by the prose form. That religious prose was now being made available to them, was already a huge concession. But it must have cost many of them a great deal of effort to read or even listen to this Middle Dutch prose. The motivation for making this intellectual leap came undoubtedly from the same source as the powers that gave rise to the thirteenth-century religious reform movement.

[136] Warnar 1999, 118–124.
[137] Coun 2004. Cf. Scheepsma 2007.

Though the aspect of religious literature in Middle Dutch was determined early on by prose, this does not mean that metrical works were unimportant. The fourteenth-century corpus of the works of Hadewijch attests to this: there the prose Visions and Letters appear side-by-side with the metrical Poems in Stanzas and Poems in couplets. And even in the circles in which the *Limburg sermons* were read other forms of prose were valued, as the later inclusion (ca. 1330) of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* in manuscirpt H demonstrates. This rhymed dramatic text even flirts with the conventions of the courtly lyrical tradition by virtue of an integrated *virelai* ballad about Mary Magdalene.

The roots of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* lie in the Ripuarian-speaking regions, an area that in the second half of the thirteenth century also produced three texts that bear an affinity to the *Limburg sermons* in terms of their character and intentions. Of these texts the *Rheinische Marienlob* in particular was composed with a great deal of attention to form. Rhyming couplets are the mainstay, but there is ample variation in terms of rhyme schemes and meter, especially in the section of the text identified in the edition as a *Marienklage* [Marian lament].[138] Scores of signs indicate that this splendid text was written for women. But in this specific case the choice of rhyme will not initially have been due to the audience's level of education. Praising Mary was the theme par excellence that compelled poets—and, later, rhetoricians, as well—to pull out all the stops in their literary efforts. This led in many cases to an exuberant panorama of variation forms (or, if you will, affectations). A much more sophisticated and productive author like Maerlant, for example, achieved his highest level in an artistic sense when he sings the praises of the heavenly Queen.[139]

An author who is very relevant for the transition from metrical verse to prose is the Nether-Rhenish anonymous who wrote *Die Lilie* and the *Buch der Minne*. *Die Lilie* is undisputedly the older of the two, for there is an explicit reference to it in the *Buch der Minne* (see § 1.4). The author begins his allegory on the lily in prose (which is, however, shot-through with short, rhyming passages), but apparently decided after a number of folios to switch to traditional rhyming couplets. There does not seem

[138] Bach 1934, 28:897–42:1238.

[139] Van Oostrom 1996, 68–71. There is also a substantial Marian lament in *Vanden levene ons heren*, which constitutes the axis around which the entire work revolves (cf. Jongen & Voorwinden 2001, 27).

to be any obvious intrinsic reason for the switch, which is effected in the following passage:

> Bit der warheide, dat is Jhesus Christus, in mach niman bliven, wan de warehtich is. Die lugene hat ein unseliche dochter, die heizet smeichen. Dit is den richen inde den geweldigen luden vile, inde alze heimelich. Si lovet ire bosheit ove si intschuldiget si, inde salvet dat herce der sundere bit der dotlicher salven irer durrer bladere, dat is irer ingelicher worde. We inde ever, we den smecheren, die de bosheit gut heizen inde dat ungereht alse dat rehte lovent! Den niet ingenuget ires selves unselicheit, si in machen och ander lude unselich.
> Si blendent die ougen der amer sundere,
> dat si van ire sunden niet in mugen gekeren,
> alse si lovent die bosheit,
> die ane zuivel zů der hellen geit.
> Dar umbe muzen si zueireldige pine haven,
> vur sich selven, inde wr ander lude missedat.[140]
>
> [With the truth, which is Jesus Christ, nobody can remain but the one who is thruthful. Falsehood has an evil daughter, whose name is Flattery. We meet her frequently among the rich and the powerful folk, and she is far too intimate with them. She praises their evil or makes excuses for them, and salves the heart of the sinners with the deadly balm of her dry leaves, that is with her inconstant words. Alas and alack, woe be to the flatterers, who call evil good and praise injustice as if it was justice! They are not content with their own damnation, if they cannot lead other people down that path, as well.
> They blind the eyes of poor sinners,
> so that they may not turn from their sinning ways,
> as they praise their evil ways,
> which without doubt will lead to hell.
> For this they shall have to suffer a two-fold torment,
> one for themselves and the other for the sins of others.]

Immediately after this passage there is a new chapter entitled *Al hie sprich van den spotteren* [Speak here about the skeptics], which is written entirely in rhyming couplets, like the rest of *Die Lilie*. It would appear as if with *Die Lilie* (preserved in just one manuscript) we may see an author at work who somewhat overconfidently began to compose in a new medium, but quickly retraced his steps. Was he afraid that his readers would not be able to cope with the new style, or did he feel uncomfortable writing religious prose in the vernacular? In the later work by the same author, the *Buch der Minne*, prose was used consistently

[140] Ed. Wüst 1909, 9:37–10,12.

throughout—with just a few interruptions (see below)—as if he had mustered sufficient courage in the meantime. The author of the *Die Lilie* and *Buch der Minne* apparently found himself at a breaking point in the evolution of religious literature in the vernacular. That fact that he was from the area of the Lower Rhine, traditionally an important cultural zone of transition, may have been a factor.[141]

Brief, rhyming passages have been interspersed with some degree of regularity in both the first part of *Die Lilie* and in the *Buch der Minne*. Nor are the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* composed exclusively in prose. In both sermon collections short fragments of rhymed verse occur in passages that exhibit other formal characteristics that do not normally belong in prose texts (such as, for example, assonance and enumeration). In the German scholarly tradition, such stylistic phenomena are typically referred to with the umbrella term *Reimprosa*.[142] In the 'Cistercian' literature of the thirteenth century the existence of rhyming prose in a variety of genres, would appear to be a constant factor.[143] A splendid, non-rhyming example from the *St. Georgen sermons* is a passage from Rd. 47 which employs parallels in exhorting the reader to praise God:

> Laz im die ere, habe du den nuzce!
> Gibe im dc lop, habe du die selde!
> Gibe im den pris, habe du dc heil![144]
>
> [Give him the glory, and may you have the benefit!
> Give him laudation, and may have you the bliss!
> Give him the praise, and may you have your salvation!]

Of an entirely different nature is an enumeration of striking natural images from Rd. 64, in which the power of God is expressed:

> Won da wirt gefůget daz binlin zů dem honig, dú nahtegal zů den harpfen, der ysop zů dem balsam, der hýrtz zů den ewigen brunnen, der stern zů dem liehten sunnen.[145]

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[141] Cf. Tervooren 2006.

[142] A thorough treatment of this phenomenon is provided in Polheim 1925, VII–XX, but he deals exclusively with the Latin. On rhyming prose in MHG, MLG and MDu. mystic texts, see Neumann 1965, 238–242; for more on Ruusbroec in this context see Willaert 1993. To my knowledge a precise definition of the phenomenon 'rhyming prose' in the vernacular is still wanting.

[143] Cf. Seidel 2003, 212–213.

[144] Rieder 1908, 150:20–23 (ms. G; the reading from A in lines 5–6).

[145] Rieder 1908, 295:15–17.

> [Because there the little bee goes with honey, the nightengale with the harp, hyssop with balsam, the stag with the eternal well, the stars with the bright sun.]

This *Sankt Georgener Predigt* is incidentally fairly well-endowed with lovely figures of speech.[146] In addition to the rhyming prose already mentioned it contains, for example, a series of antitheses and a nice play on words concerning the virtues of Christ.[147]

The Middle Dutch translator of the *St. Georgen sermons* usually did not pay much attention to the presence of rhyming prose in his exemplar. Both of the passages just cited are entirely absent from the Middle Dutch text.[148] Sometimes it would appear that he noticed the rhyming prose, but the translator's efforts to replicate it are not very convincing. In Rd. 40 we read the following four rhyming lines: *Mir ist daz herze virserit, daz es niemir wirt gesunt, nach Jhesu mime liebe, der machot mine sele wunt* [My heart is in pain, such that it will never be healthy again, for Jesus, my love, who wounds my soul].[149] In the Middle Dutch translation this becomes: *Min herte es mi druwe, so dat nemmer en wert gesunt, na Jhesu minen liven, di mact mine sile wont, ende, als hi wilt, gesont* [My heart is heavy, that it will never again be healthy, for Jesus, my love, who wounds my soul and, if he desires, can heal it once again].[150] To be sure, a rhyming line has been added, but the regularity of the German source has been lost. Moreover, the translator does not seem to have noticed that the word *gesont* had been used already. The translator of the *Limburg sermons* was apparently not very attentive to the presence of rhyming prose, from which we may conclude that it held no intrinsic importance for him.

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[146] Seidel 2003, 219 n. 61 provides more examples of rhyming prose in the *SGP*.

[147] Rieder 1908, 294:24–28 and 295:6–9, respectively.

[148] In Rd. 60, the SG redaction of the Palm Tree treatise, a number of citations from the *Sankt Trudperter Hohelied* had been interpolated, the remarkable style of which has been called 'Kunstprosa' [artistic prose] (cf. Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2:22–53). In the MHG text this stylistic prose has remained more or less intact, but in the MDu. translation few traces of it remain. It is precisely in this portion of Rd. 60 where the translator interpolates frequently.

[149] Kern 1895, 7, who cites ms. G; he calls this passage 'een halve zogenoemde Nibelungenstrofe' [half a so-called Nibelung stanza].

[150] Kern 1895, 7; cf. 221:2–5. Kern uses this example to prove that the MHG text is the original. Ms. A has the same passage but in a corrupted form reminiscent of H; cf. Rieder 1908, 126:11–12.

That is not to say that rhyming prose does not occur at all in the *Limburg sermons*. In *Dets van seven manieren van minnen* (Ls. 42) in particular some splendid examples have been incorporated into the text, especially in the seventh way. There, among other things, we read:

> In lif ende leet esse te doegene gereet, in doet, in leven, wilt si der minnen plegen. Ende in tgevulen hars herten doegse grote smerten, ende ombe der minnen wille, begerse dlantscap te winne. Ende alse har in al dit heft besugt, sos in glorien al har tuvlogt.[151]
>
> [The soul is ready to suffer in well and woe, in death and in life is wishes to belong to love, and in its heart it feels the suffering of cruel pain, and for the sake of love it longs to come to its true home.][152]

Despite the presence of such a fine example, it must be observed that rhyming prose in the *Limburg sermons* play a subordinate role, at best.

An intriguing question remains whether the author of Ls. 42 consciously composed rhyming prose, or whether he (she) inserted an already existing poem into the text. The four Nether-Rhinish poems preserved in the manuscript containing *Die Lilie* are proof enough that several kinds of brief, mystical poems existed. Seidel argues that a floral allegory in Rd. 74 exhibiting even more pronounced traces of rhyming prose, must have originated in a now-lost lyrical tradition. In the *Rheinische Marienlob*, namely, there is a strikingly similar floral allegory, which appears to go back to the same tradition.[153] We may certainly not discount the possibility of a borrowing from another tradition, but on the other hand these kinds of floral allegory were so popular in the thirteenth century that they show up everywhere. It seems to me just as likely that two authors working in similar contexts set about casting into verse certain established floral metaphors.

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[151] Kern 1895, 581, 16–21. Cf. especially the following passages in Kern 1895, 579: 8–11, 580:19–22 and 581:7–16, but in fact the 7th way in its entirety can be offered as an example.

[152] Transl. Colledge, in Petroff 1986, 206.

[153] Seidel 2003, 219–220. Cf. Rd. 74: *da sol uffe sin der lylie ganzer kúschikeit/ir sunt ôch haben den rose varwen blůmen der minne und der gedultikeit / behaltet ôch den viol der diemůtikeit / allir andirre blůmen schin / dc sun alle tugende sin / die sulint ir habin alle gemeinliche / und iegeliche súnderliche* (ed. Rieder 1908, 317, 19–22, after ms. G) and further the *Rheinische Marienlob*: *He nam si self bit siner hant: / dí wize lilj der reinicheide / dí brun viol der otmůdcheide / dí rose dí bezeichent beide / dí minn' bit der verdoldicheide. / He besach al din gůt gekrüde / it is <zů> lanc, dat ich 't al dúde / wand al gekrüd has du aleine / dat sind di dügde algemeine* (Bach 1933, 8, 194–202).

Hans Neumann provides a brief consideration of the phenomenon of 'rhyming prose' in a study of the possible connections between Mechtild von Magdeburg's *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit* [The Flowing Light of the Godhead] and Middle Dutch female mysticism.[154] Mechtild employs rhyming prose on every page of her book, whereby she exhibits a strong preference for assonance. Neumann notes that in Hadewijch's works and in Beatrijs van Nazareth's *Van seven manieren van minnen* all kinds of transitional forms occur, from straightforward prose to strict metrical verse. He observes the same phenomena in Nether-Rhinish mysticism of the thirteenth century, namely in *Die Lilie* and the *Buch der Minne*. The occurrence of rhyming prose may not be so much a distinguishing stylistic feature of thirteenth-century 'Cistercian' literature in German, as it is of early vernacular in the Germanic-speaking regions. Neumann takes great pains to discover a direct connection between Mechtild von Magdeburg on the one hand, and Beatrijs and Hadewijch on the other, but without success. For the time being it seems best to assume that there was no direct contact, but that the use of rhyming prose as it were thrust itself upon authors of vernacular mystical literature from the Meuse/Rhine region.[155]

Neumann rightly points out that rhyming prose is not a native element, restricted to vernacular literature.[156] On the contrary, rhyming prose is ubiquitous in the Latin literary tradition. According to the great authority on the phenomenon, Karl Polheim, it enjoyed its period of greatest popularity in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In the theological literature it appears most frequently in the 'sermon' and 'treatise' genres, whereby authors like Bernard of Clairvaux and Richard of St. Victor were the champions of Latin rhyming prose. They not only worked a great deal with rhyme in all kinds of variant forms, but sought as well after homonyms and loved to play with the meanings of words.[157] The use of rhyming prose and other formal features in theological prose is undoubtedly related to its contemplative function. The splendid use of language exhibited by Richard and Bernard refers

[154] Neumann 1965, 238–242.

[155] On the possible connections between the female mystics mentioned above, see Scheepsma 2004b.

[156] Neumann 1965, 240.

[157] Polheim 1925, 363–435; on sermon and tract, pp. 383–392, on Bernard, pp. 389–390, on Richard, p. 418.

on the one hand to divine perfection and keeps the meditated mind focused, on the other. Apparently the authors of vernacular mystical/contemplative texts were inspired by this practice. This makes it all the more likely that the author of Ls. 42 composed the rhyming passages himself, rather than borrowing them from an already existing poem.

CHAPTER FOUR

BACKGROUNDS

The *Limburg sermons* present themselves as a relatively closed block of texts, which do not reveal much information about their historical roots. It is absolutely clear that the sermons were originally written for a religious community with a monastic lifestyle, but our picture of this primary audience is still very much out of focus. Nor do we know much at all about the mysterious compiler of the corpus. Here and there the texts and manuscript evidence provide clues that can help us acquire a sharper image of the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* and the circles for whom he intended his work. In this chapter we shall follow a number of the most promising leads.

We shall first provide a global analysis of the later transmission of the texts, to the extent that it can tell us something about the thirteenth-century genesis of the *Limburg sermons*. Next follows a consideration of the relation to the Letters of Hadewijch, a Middle Dutch corpus with which the *Limburg sermons* have emphatic ties. The third section deals with the striking interest in *minne* mysticism that these sermons exhibit and places this in a somewhat wider context. The next two sections both study the relationship between the *Limburg sermons* and the Old French religious tradition, which is both so close and yet very distant at one and the same time. In conclusion we explore dimensions of the European network of persons and circles interested in mysticism with which the *Limburg sermons* might be associated.

4.1 *The Later Transmission*

From a chronological perspective the *Limburg sermons* have an unstable transmission history. We have in H a late thirteenth-century manuscript containing the entire cycle and we can moreover deduce that at least one complete manuscript from text phase H* preceded it. But whereas in the fourteenth century the dissemination of the *St. Georgen sermons* continued, so that these sermons traveled out from the Alemannic region to among other places Bavaria and Thüringen, the transmission

of the *Limburg sermons* appears to have stagnated.[1] Corpus manuscripts from the fourteenth century are unknown; the transmission from this time period is restricted to a small number of manuscripts and texts, which are moreover at some remove from the *Limburg sermons* tradition. In the second half of the fifteenth century renewed reception took place—at least if the transmission presents a representative historical picture—which was undoubtedly linked to the literary offensive orchestrated at the time by the Modern Devotion. No fewer than five corpus manuscripts containing the *Limburg sermons* were produced during this period (Am, B1, Br1, Br2, La); only manuscript W2 might be somewhat older. As a literary-historical phenomenon this second wave of reception will remain outside the scope of this study.[2] We will study only its geographical dissemination, in the hope that we might find connections with its thirteenth-century textual history.

In the fifteenth-century transmission of the *Limburg sermons*, two centers of gravity clearly stand out, both of which lie in the eastern-most region of the Dutch-speaking area. By virtue of its size, the collection of the convent of canonesses regular Nazareth in Geldern (on the Rhine) deserves first mention. It is the home base of both the corpus manuscripts B1 and B2, which belong to the reception branches y2 and y1, respectively, of the *St. Georgen sermons* transmission. The library at Nazareth possessed as well three manuscripts that contained loose *Limburg sermons*:

– Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS germ. qu. 1084: Ls. 3 (Rd. 39).[3]
– Bonn, Universitätsbibliothek, S 2052: Ls. 47 (Rd. 36), Ls. 33 and Ls. 40.[4]

[1] Cf. Seidel 2003, 263–276 for the dissemination of *SGP* and *LS* in later centuries.

[2] On manuscript production in the 15th-century Netherlands, see especially Gumbert 1990, 24–79; on the backgrounds of the 'literary explosion' of the Modern Devotion, see e.g. Scheepsma 1997, 25–27. The pattern of transmission of the *LS* deviates from the norm in that there exists a thirteenth-century manuscript, whereby the gap between it and the fifteenth century seems rather wide. Normally, for any given older religious text in the Middle Dutch tradtion there are at most only one or two fourteenth century manuscripts, after which a second, much more extensive wave of reception fifteenth-century burst on the scene. A well-known example of this is the *Legenda aurea* translation of 1357 by the so-called *Bijbelvertaler van 1360* [Bible Translator of 1360], by far the greater number of manuscripts of which date to the fifteenth century (Williams-Krapp 1986, 53–84). In actual fact the *LS* conform to this pattern.

[3] Cf. Seidel 2003, 133.

[4] Cf. Seidel 2003, 135.

– Krakau, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Berol. Ms. germ. quart. 1085: Ls. 8 (Rd. 49).[5]

The library of the canonesses regular of Nazareth, for the most part acquired in the period 1445–1520, is one of the richest extant collections from the medieval Low Countries.[6] Nazareth's location in the area of the Lower Rhine, a geographical intersection, apparently enabled the nuns to draw from both the Dutch and the German traditions. Around 1490 they produced both a manuscript that is based on an exemplar of the otherwise complete German branch of transmission of the *St. Georgen sermons*, y1, and a manuscript that contains a series of Middle Dutch *Limburg sermons*, which thus belongs in y2.[7]

> Ms. Berlin 1084 from Nazareth contains on ff. 72r–122v the *Boec der minnen*, as well, not in the original Ripuarian form, but rather in a Middle Dutch translation.[8] In this context mention should also be made of manuscripts Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS germ. qu. 1092 and 1097, both probably produced at Nazareth.[9] Both codices contain the *Boichelgen van der lylien* [The little book of the Lilies], a text that, like *Die Lilie*, comprises a paraphrase of the lily allegory that appears as 'Additamentum IV' in the edition of Bonaventure's *Vitis mystica* (see § 1.4). The transmission of the *Boichelgen* appears to have been concentrated in the Lower Rhine area.[10]

The second centre of gravity is comprised by the library of St. Bartholomew's at Maastricht. From this house of Beghards three manuscripts containing the *Limburg sermons* have come down to us:

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[5] Cf. Seidel 2003, 134.

[6] Because Stooker & Verbeij 1997 unfortunately adopted the contemporary border between the Netherlands and Belgium as their line of demarcation, instead of medieval linguistic boundaries, the considerable collection of manuscripts from Nazareth were not included in this standard work. For the (sermon) manuscripts from Nazareth, see Costard 1992. Monika Costard (Berlin) is currently preparing a dissertation on the manuscripts of Nazareth.

[7] Seidel 2003, 178–179. According to Slijpen 1937, 271–272, B1 is based on a Limburg exemplar.

[8] A description of the manuscript can be found in De Vreese 1900–1902, 123–130 (M^5) and Lüders 1960, 153–155 and 146–147; cf. Honemann 1989, 1061–1062.

[9] Costard 1992, 204.

[10] Ruh 1956, 185–186 and Neumann 1985, 829.

– Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, II 112: Ls. 31 (Rd. 60) (excerpt).[11]
– Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, IV 138: Ls. 7 (Rd. 48) and Ls. 8 (Rd. 49).[12]
– Weert, Minderbroeders, 10: Ls. 40.[13]

All in all this concerns only five *Limburg sermons*, spread out over three manuscripts. St. Bartholomew's is thus not nearly as important for the transmission as the convent of Nazareth.

It should come as no surprise that the industrious scribes of the Maastricht house of Beghards should have copied a number of *Limburg sermons*.[14] According to a trail now gone somewhat cold, manuscript H resided with the nuns of Maagdendries in that city. The *Limburg sermons* were thus available in Maastricht and the Beghards of St. Bartholomew's could very well even have used manuscript H as their exemplar. Manuscript IV 138 would appear to point in that direction, at any rate, in particular because of the transcription of Ls. 7. At the beginning of that text we encounter the following sentence: *Nu sullen wi merken hoe si <haer> biedt: sy en bi<e>dt <haer> niet allen lieden mer die ghene die hoers begheren* [Now we shall see to whom she presents herself: she does not present herself to everyone, but only those who desire her].[15] This passage has been corrected by a medieval hand; I have placed these corrections here between pointed brackets. In H the same sentence appears as follows: *Nu sulwi mercken win si bid: sin bid nit al die lide, mer si bid degene di hare begeren* [Now we will observe whom she summons: she does not summone veryone, but only those who desire her].[16] The scribe of IV 138 changed the form *bid* [summon] that appears H into *biedt*. This was apparently not clear enough for the corrector. He therefore added the reflexive pronoun *haer* toe (and one instance of *e* in *biedt*). The form *biedt* was apparently not immediately comprehensible to one and all at the end of the fifteenth century. It seems therefore reasonable to

[11] Cf. Seidel 2003, 136.
[12] Cf. Seidel 2003, 136.
[13] Stooker & Verbeij 1997, vol. 2, no. 886 (p. 296).
[14] On the library of St Bartholomew see e.g. Deschamps 1954, nrs. 48–59, Deschamps 1958, Stooker & Verbeij 1997, vol. 1, p. 163 and vol. 2, nrs. 866–888 and Biesheuvel, Hamburger & Scheepsma (in press).
[15] Kern 1895, 239: 6–7 and Brussels, KB, IV 138, fol. 263ra, respectively.
[16] Kern 1895, 239, 6–7.

suppose that the scribe of IV 138 had copied this archaic form from H or some other older manuscript containing the *Limburg sermons*.[17]

> It is worth mentioning as well manuscript Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS germ. oct. 329, from the tertiaries at Aachen. It contains the same combination of sermons as Brussels IV 138 from St. Bartholomew's: Ls. 7 (Rd. 48) and Ls. 8 (Rd. 49).[18] This coincidence raises suspicions about further literary connections between the Beghards from Maastricht and the tertiaries from Aachen. It is tempting to assume such a connection with the presence of the *Maastrichtse passiespel* in manuscript H, which has been situated in the neighborhood of Aachen, but concrete indications for this are wanting.

In the case of Maastricht, manuscript H may have functioned as an exemplar; it was in all probability residing in the city at the time. The presence of *Limburg sermons* in no fewer than three manuscripts at St. Bartholomew's may thus be accounted for by the presence since the late thirteenth century of one or more manuscripts in this region, as well as by the scribal activities of a number of Beghards from this house. Such a direct historical link with the thirteenth-century *Limburg sermons* tradition appears to be absent in the case of the nuns of Nazareth. Many manuscripts containing religious material were copied in this convent, and they were brought in from all possible directions, from Brabant as well as from the Lower Rhine region and the IJssel valley. It remains a striking fact, however, that texts from different reception branches of the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* were copied here.

What happened with the *Limburg sermons* in the fourteenth century is rather obscure. Traces of their reception in this century are virtually non-existent. The most we can do is postulate that manuscript H received a new owner in the first decades of the century, who then added the *Maastrichtse passiespel* to the manuscript. Judging by the dialect of this text and a number of other annotations and corrections in H, this second owner was settled further to the east than the first. In the entire transmission of the *Limburg sermons* however, the one thirteenth-century

[17] For these observations I have restricted myself to a sample survey from ms. IV 138. The relationship to H is more difficult to determine for ms. II 122, because there Ls. 31 has only been excerpted. The reading of Ls. 40 in ms. Weert 10 deviates quite strongly from that of H immediately at the outset. The use of the term *holt*, where H reads *hout*, also gives one pause in this regard. Closer study of the three *LS* manuscripts from St. Bartholomew's might well provide greater clarity on the issue of their relationship to H.

[18] Seidel 2003, 134.

codex occupies a rather eccentric position. The other six corpus manuscripts from the fifteenth century are not based on H, but on the now-lost textual phase H*. The common link between the earliest thirteenth-century transmission and the fifteenth-century hey-day has unfortunately not come down to us. But a small corpus of loose *Limburg sermons* and related texts from the fourteenth-century does exist, which is well worth exploring.

As is so often the case in the history of Middle Dutch religious literature, the famous library of the canons regular of St. Paul's at Oudergem plays in this case, as well, an important role.[19] The library of Rooklooster, the name under which this monastery is better known, appears in many cases to have been a conduit of Middle Dutch texts from the fourteenth century. This holds true, for example, for almost all of the translations of standard works from the Christian tradition made by the so-called Bible Translator of 1360, but also for innumerable other works, such as the Copenhagen *Leven van Lutgart*, the only manuscript of which resided in Rooklooster circa 1400. Many of these texts, like the *Limburg sermons*, received a new lease on life in the second half of the fifteenth century. The richness of the Middle Dutch library at Rooklooster has even led to the supposition that we are in fact dealing with a 'translatorium', where Middle Dutch translations of texts from the Latin canon were systematically produced in Middle Dutch.[20] The in-depth codicological study by Erik Kwakkel into the fourteenth-century Middle Dutch manuscripts from Rooklooster clearly reveals, however, that most of them were made not in the regular monastery, but rather in establishments such as the Carthusian house at Herne (southwest of Brussels). In an as of yet not entirely explained way many of the manuscripts produced at Herne found their way round about 1400 to the library of Rooklooster.[21]

Rooklooster owes perhaps its greatest fame to the list of Middle Dutch works contained in one of the manuscripts in its library.[22] The list carries the inscription *Dit sijn die Dietsche boeke die ons toebehoeren* [These are the Middle Dutch books that belong to us] and constitutes an inventory of

[19] On Rooklooster see *MB* IV–4, 1089–1163 and Kohl, Persoons & Weiler 1976, 108–130.

[20] The last to examine the vernacular library of Rooklooster in these terms is Kock 1999, 193–222 (with exhaustive bibliography).

[21] Kwakkel 2002.

[22] MS Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1351–72, f. 1v (circa 1400).

a number of codices that were available at Rooklooster(?).[23] The following entry appears on the list: *Item een sermoenboec ende beghint 'Stepha<nus autem plenus. Dese woer>t sprect sente Lucas, etc.* [A book of sermons which begins 'Stephanus autem plenus. These words are spoken by St. Luke, etc.]'[24] This is indisputably the *incipit* of Ls. 3 (Rd. 39), though we are not able to determine whether the text in question belongs to redaction y2 or not. There is also a Middle Dutch redaction of Rd. 39 that lies outside y2 and that is apparently based directly on the *St. Georgen sermons* tradition; this text appears among other places in manuscript Vv, to be discussed below, which also comes from Rooklooster. De Vreese wondered whether the reference in the booklist might not be to Vv itself, but concluded rightly that this manuscript could hardly be mistaken for a *sermoen boec*.[25] Nevertheless, around 1400 a manuscript was produced with Middle Dutch sermons that begins with Ls. 3. None of the extant corpus manuscripts from redaction y2 begins with Ls. 3, though this does not mean all that much. Changes in the order in which the texts were presented are after all quite typical of the *Limburg sermons* tradition.

Both of the fourteenth-century manuscripts in which texts are preserved that are appendant to the *Limburg sermons* annex resided at one time or another in the Rooklooster library. The monastery in the Sonian forest, near Brussels was founded in 1374. Because the scripts of both manuscripts point to the middle of the fourteenth century, neither of them could have been written there. Manuscript Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 3067–73, also known as the Ruusbroec-manuscript Vv, is a composite manuscript in twelve parts, all of which date between 1350 en 1400.[26] Somewhere in the first half of the fifteenth century its constituent parts must have been bound into one volume, which was subsequently brought into the vernacular library of Rooklooster. At an earlier stage, i.e. before they wound up at Rooklooster, a number of its parts had already been combined into larger units. Thus it was

[23] Ed. Derolez 2001, 180–182; the oldest edition is De Vreese 1962a (a reprint of an article from 1903). See also Kwakkel 2002, 24–30 and 26–29 (figure 1) for general background and identification of the books in the collection (with bibliography); on pp. 188–189 Kwakkel proffers the suggestion that the booklist, too, is from Herne.

[24] Derolez 2001, no. 18 (p. 182) and De Vreese 1962a, 66.

[25] De Vreese 1962a, 66.

[26] Detailed descriptions are provided by De Vreese 1900–1902, 639–699 and Kwakkel 2002, 227–233; cf. as well *Jan van Ruusbroec* 1981, no. 46 (pp. 146–149) and Kwakkel & Mulder 2001, 154–157. In principle I follow the recent findings of Kwakkel.

that parts I–V were consolidated into a single entity not long after 1363. Parts I and IV were copied by the so-called *Ferguut* scribe, who additionally had primarily Middle Dutch epic poetry to his name. His activities are dated to ca. 1350 and localized with some degree of certainty in the region surrounding Brussels. It is furthermore striking that in the composite parts I, IV and VIII marginal notes appear in German hands. Forms such as *anzebetten* or *zuo* point to the Middle High German-speaking area, rather than to the neighboring Ripuarian or Low German areas.[27] The presence of these forms in the earlier booklet I–IV leads one to suspect that these composite parts were at one point at least temporarily far removed from Brabant before they ended up in the library of Rooklooster.[28]

In composite part II (f. 15–41), written by an unknown scribe, there appears among other things *Van seven manieren van heileger minnen* [On the seven ways of sacred love] (Ls. 42). In our discussion of that text it was determined that manuscript had its own variants with respect to H and W2, the other manuscripts that contain Ls. 42. H and W2 each occupy clearly delineated places with respect to one another in the y2 branch of the *Limburg sermons*. Composite part II also contains a short piece of mystic poetry in the form of the poem *Ay edele minne / In minen beginne* [Ah, noble Love / in my beginning], which is reminiscent of one of Hadewijch's lyrics. We further find a few short treatises that belong to the pseudo-Eckhart literature, such as *Dit sijn tekine eens vernuftechs gronts* [These are signs of a rational ground] (fol. 15r–18v) and a dictum in the name of the great Dominican master (f. 19r–v).[29] Not just the presence of a German hand, but the composition of the second part of Vv and that of the other four parts of this old booklet appear to point to interaction with the mystical literature of the German Rhineland.[30]

Part VI of manuscript Vv comprises the folios 80–133 and is dated to 1361. While it is true that this section does not contain any of the *Limburg sermons*, there is an abbreviated adaptation of Guiard of Laon's sermon on the twelve fruits (see § 2.6). Given that this text is

[27] Cf. Kwakkel 2002, 184–186; the terms cited appear on p. 232.

[28] Kwakkel 2002, 229 assigns this German scribe the sigla a; his work appears in parts I–IV, but also in part VIII of manuscript Vv. Cf. Scheepsma 2007 on part I of this ms. and its German connections.

[29] On the contents of this part see Reypens & Van Mierlo 1926, 114*–123*. On the Eckhart material in this ms. see Scheepsma 2008, 15–19.

[30] Cf. Kwakkel & Mulder 2001, 157–159.

based directly on Guiard's Latin sermon *Ex utraque parte*, there is no immediate connection to Ls. 40. This short twelve fruits treatise does, however, bear witness to a comparable interest in the meaning of the holy sacrament. Manuscript Vv constitutes the oldest known source of this text, which may thus be dated to before 1361. As the place of origin, Brabant seems the most likely.

Part VII contains just one text, namely a Middle Dutch translation of Rd. 39, the *St. Georgen sermon* with the theme *Stephanus autem* (fig. 19). We know this text also as Ls. 3, but the translation in Vv cannot be considered to belong to the y2 group.[31] Strictly speaking, the Stephanus sermon from manuscript Vv is not affiliated with the *Limburg sermons*. What this tells us is that Middle Dutch translations of the *St. Georgen sermons* existed outside the y2 tradition. The slightly variant Middle Dutch translation of Rd. 39 in the Vv version appears twice more in fifteenth-century manuscripts and has thus established its own tradition. One of the manuscripts comes from Nazareth in Geldern (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MS germ. qu. 1084; see above), the other comes from St. Agnes in Maaseik (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 73 H 30). Like Nazareth, this Limburg monastery of regular canonesses left behind a large collection of Middle Dutch manuscripts, which includes a remarkably large number of mystic materials.[32]

Three of the twelve constituent parts of manuscript Vv contain, then, texts that have a more or less strong connection with the *Limburg sermons*, but none of them can be attributed to the y2 transmission. The Stephanus sermon from Vv clearly deviates from Ls. 3 and the version from Ls. 42 in this manuscript differs from that in both manuscripts from the y2 tradition. The twelve fruits text in Vv deviates so much from Ls. 40 that it renders the search for a connection with y2 irrelevant. The various constituent parts of Vv are thus at some remove from the *Limburg sermons* corpus, whereby Ls. 42 comprises the strongest link. Not much is known about the origins of the separate parts of this composite manuscript, though it is certain that the Brabantine dialect is used in all twelve of them. An origin in Brussels or its surroundings is probable for the booklet comprising parts I–IV. The composition of manuscript Vv leads one to conclude that in Brabant, perhaps Brussels, sometime around the middle of the fourteenth century there arose an interest in

[31] Seidel 2003, 135.

[32] On the manuscripts of St. Agnes see especially Deschamps 1967 and Stooker & Verbeij 1997, vol. 1, *passim* and vol. 2, nos. 789–865.

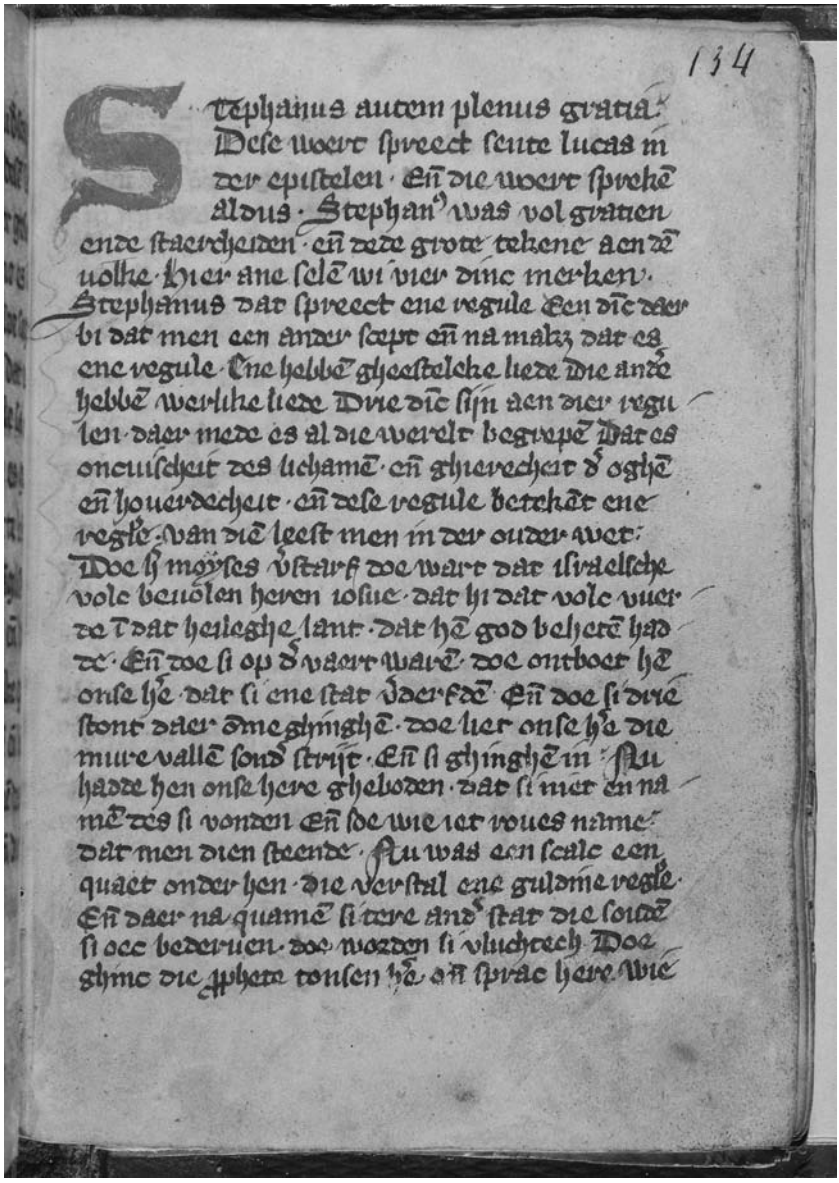

Fig. 19. MS Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 3067–73, f. 134r. The opening of the sermon *Stephanus autem*.

different kinds of texts that also appear in the *Limburg sermons* corpus. A direct connection between manuscript Vv and the *Limburg sermons* tradition, however, is not demonstrable.

The second Rooklooster manuscript in which a text related to the *Limburg sermons* appears is manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, 920. Like Vv it is a composite comprised of parts derived from different periods of the fourteenth century.[33] The texts exhibit Brabantine dialectal features. Middle High German hands were also at work in Mazarine 920, which based on the script can be dated to the third quarter of the fourteenth century (I and VII).[34] Whereas in Vv we saw only loose words or phrases, in this manuscript complete, albeit short texts have been added, among which is a prayer to John the Evangelist and a prayer in verse to Mary.[35] The language of these prayers has been localized to the West Alemannic language area, i.e. the region to the west of Lake Constance.[36] Included in part V of this manuscript, which dates possibly to before the middle of the fourteenth century, is the *Boengaert van der geesteleker herten* [Orchard of the spiritual heart]. This text corresponds for the most part to the first half of Ls. 39, or *Dbuec van den boegarde* [Book of the Orchard] (see § 2.5). The Paris text exhibits many more of the epistolary characteristics the original must have possessed than Ls. 39, in which the epistolary background origins are only rudimentarily present. The relationship of Mazarine 920 with the *Limburg sermons* strongly resembles that of manuscript Vv. The Paris manuscript contains, it is true, a text that is closely related to the *Limburg sermons* tradition (in redaction y2), but is not connected directly to the sermon collection.

The corpus manuscript W2, dating to the middle of the fifteenth century, also comes from the library of Rooklooster. Three of the *Limburg sermons* contained in this manuscript have inscriptions that are reminiscent of the table of contents entries in manuscript H. For stemmatological reasons we have determined that W2 did not derive these from H, but must rather have got them from H* (see § 2.1). A comparable case is the inscription in Ls. 39 in MS Brussels, Koninklijke

[33] A detailed description is available in De Vreese 1900–1902, 413–429 (w) and Kwakkel 2002, 254–259 (cf. Kwakkel 1999a, 36); I follow the new assessment by Kwakkel.

[34] Cf. Kwakkel 2002, 184–186.

[35] This MHG (partially also Latin) texts were edited by De Baere 1976, vol. 1, 113–116.

[36] The localisation of the dialect in Scheepsma 2007, 258–260.

Bibliotheek, 11.729–30, which was also housed in the Rooklooster library. Somewhere in the vicinity of the Brabantine monastery, then, around the beginning of the fifteenth century, there must have been a *Limburg sermons* manuscript from the y2 branch that was based directly on H*. It may be that this was the lost first manuscript containing the *Limburg sermons*, but neither is it impossible that it was the manuscript or the booklist that began with the sermon on *Stephanus autem*.

That the two fourteenth-century Brabantine manuscripts from the library of Rooklooster have no direct connection with manuscript H was clear from the beginning. Connections between these Rooklooster codices and the y2 redaction of the *Limburg sermons* prove not to be demonstrable. Both manuscripts from the Rooklooster library apparently draw upon other sources, which in terms of their contents did exhibit certain similarities with the *Limburg sermons*. Given the geographical connections of both manuscripts (Carthusian house of Herne, canon regulars of Rooklooster) and the dialect used, these missing sources should be sought in Brabant. Manuscript W2 from Rooklooster is directly connected to the thirteenth-century tradition, for it goes back to the textual phase H*. Was the exemplar from which the scribes of W2 copied a five *Limburg sermons* perhaps the basis for the fifteenth-century hey-day of our collection of texts?

It is in all respects probable that the fourteenth-century missing link in the *Limburg sermons* transmission is to be found in the Duchy of Brabant. This region is prominently represented in the fifteenth-century transmission of the *Limburg sermons*, by the otherwise unlocalizeable corpus manuscripts Am and Br1, by W2 from Rooklooster and Br2 from St. Luciëndal near Sint-Truiden, and by a substantial number of manuscripts with scattered *Limburg sermons*.[37] The corpus manuscripts from Brabant are on the whole also somewhat older than those from the region somewhat further to the east, more specifically the Meuse-Rhine area, that suggests itself as the second centre of gravity. The corpus manuscripts B1 and B2 come from Nazareth in Geldern and La probably stems from the Windesheim monastery of Frenswegen near Nordhorn (Westphalia); additionally there are a few 'Streuüberlieferung' from this region, amongst others from Nazareth. Apart from H, the modern provinces of Limburg in the Netherlands and Belgium can

[37] See Seidel 2003, 132–146 for further data on the 'Streuüberlieferung'; most of the MDu. mss. are discussed there, as well.

boast only the scattered transmission among the Beghards in Maastricht and the female regulars in Maaseik.

> In light of the Brabantine dominance in the transmission of the *Limburg sermons* it may not go unrecorded that according to J. Alaerts, the editor of Jan van Ruusbroec's first treatise, *Dat rijcke der ghelieven*, this text had as its source one of the Middle Dutch sermons. In Ls. 11 four virtues of a straight path are distinguished. In Alaert's view, Ruusbroec incorporated these paths into his firstling, which was composed around 1340. In the process the perspective is changed considerably: where in Ls. 11 these virtues pertain to the life of labor or the common Christian on his way to heaven, Ruusbroec applies them to the mystic, who in this earthly life catches a glimpse of heavenly bliss.[38] Jan van Ruusbroec must thus have had access to a manuscript containing the *Limburg sermons*.

Brabant is unassailably the most important hotbed of the Middle Dutch mystical tradition in the fourteenth century. The existence of such manuscripts as Mazarine 920 and Vv proves that before the middle of this century an interest arose in that region for the kind of literature assembled in the *Limburg sermons* collection. It is therefore a legitimate question to ask whether the original phase H* should not be sought in Brabant rather than in either of the Limburgs.

4.2 *The Letters of Hadewijch*

The only Middle Dutch textual complex with which the *Limburg sermons* have any demonstrable connections are the Letters of Hadewijch.[39] This collection contains 31 letters and other prose pieces. It is preserved in three complete corpuses, together with the Visions, the *Strofische gedichten* [Poems in Stanzas] *Mengeldichten* [Poems in Couplets]. These three corpus manuscripts, known by the sigla A, B and C, were written and used in Brabant in the fourteenth century.[40] The Rooklooster library

[38] Alaerts 2002, 84–90 (Cf. 35–40); Alaerts names the *LS* as the primary source for the *Rijcke*, even before William of St. Thierry, Bonaventure and Hugo Ripelin of Strasbourg.

[39] I repeat in this section the argument from Scheepsma 2000, which will in large part be summarized, but on some points elucidated and expanded.

[40] In this book Hadewijch's Poems in Stanzas, Letters and Poems in Couplets are cited from the standard editions by Van Mierlo, respectively Van Mierlo 1942, Van Mierlo 1947 and Van Mierlo 1952. These editions are based on manuscript C, which Van Mierlo took to be the oldest. As Kwakkel demonstrates in 1999a, A is clearly the oldest Hadewijch manuscript, which should be taken into consideration in future

proves also to be of significant importance for the transmission of Hadewijch, as well: two of the three corpus manuscripts were held in this collection. Additionally there is a small, scattered corpus of a few of Hadewijch's Letters and some fragments. There is also a Middle High German transmission in which a few pieces from the oeuvre of (*Sante*) *Adelwip* are preserved.[41]

The corpus manuscripts containing the Hadewijch's oeuvre:

A: Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2879–80, ff. 1r–41v, Letters; ff. 42r–59v, Visions; f. 59v–61v, *Lijst der volmaakten* [List of the Perfect]; ff. 62r–87r, Poems in Stanzas; ff. 87r–101v, Poems in Couplets 1–16; the script dates to the second quarter of the fourteenth century; comes probably from the library of the Carthusian Herne and resided at Rooklooster from ca. 1400; appears probably on the Rooklooster booklist.[42]

B: Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2877–2878, ff. 1r–59r, Letters; ff. 59v–89v, Visions; ff. 89v–93r, *Lijst der volmaakten*; ff. 93r–132r, Poems in Stanzas; ff. 132r–147r, Poems in Couplets 1–16; ff. 148r–154v, *Twee-vormich tractaetken* [A brief bipartite treatise]; ff. 163v–166r, Poems in Couplets 17–29; script dates to second half of the fourteenth century, presumably written at Herne; resided at Rooklooster ca. 1400; appears probably on the Rooklooster booklist.[43]

C: Gent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 941, ff. 1r–18vb, Visions; ff. 18vb–20vb, *Lijst der volmaakten*; ff. 20vb–49ra, Letters; ff. 49rb–71rb, Poems in Stanzas; ff. 71va–74va, *Twee-vormich tractaetken*; ff. 74va–85rb, Poems in couplets 1–16; ff. 85rb–90va, Poems in Couplets 17–29; script is end of fourteenth century; in the fifteenth century in possession of the lay brothers of Bethlehem near Leuven.[44]

Scattered Middle Dutch fourteenth-century transmission:

Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, 920 (see § 4.1), ff. 120r–124v, Letter 6; ff. 124v–126r, Letter 10; both in composite part VII, dating to the period 1325–1350; the manuscript was at Rooklooster ca. 1400.[45]

The Middle High German transmission:

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS germ. oct. 12, ff. 38r–40r, Letter 10; script probably second half of the fourteenth

editions. Because Dros & Willaert 1996 use A for their edition of the Visions and the *Lijst der volmaakten*, for those texts I have quoted from their edition. Translations of Hadewijch's works are here taken from Hart 1980.

[41] On the MHG transmission of Hadewijch/Adelwip see Van Mierlo 1933, Van Mierlo 1934b, Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 265–276, Scheepsma 2000, 663–665 and Williams-Krapp 2003, 45–46.

[42] For this ms. see Kwakkel 1999a, especially 29–32 and Kwakkel 2002, 220–221.

[43] On this ms. see Kwakkel 1999a, 32–33; cf. Kwakkel 2002, 218–219.

[44] On this ms. see Reynaert 1996, 72–76 and Kwakkel 1999a, 34–35.

[45] On this ms. see De Vreese 1900–1902, 413–429 and Kwakkel 2002, 254–259.

century; contains an owner's mark from 1412 that refers to the 'Sankt-Katharinaklause' at Haguenau.[46]
Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS germ. qu. 149, ff. 144v–146v, Letter 10; script presumably ca. 1400.[47]
Einsiedeln, cod. 277, ff. 220r–v: used to fill out the last folio of a quire are fragments of Letter 5, Letter 6, Poem in couplets 5 and Poem in couplets 6; the manuscript was produced probably round the middle of the fourteenth century; it originally belonged to the Beguine from Basel Margaretha zum Goldenen Ring and was later used in *alle hüser des waldes* [all the houses in the wood], meaning the four Beguine houses in the valley near Einsiedeln (Switzerland).[48]

In the last quarter of the thirteenth century the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* used textual material that also appears in Hadewijch's Letters with a certain degree of regularity. Thus far direct borrowings from Hadewijch's visions and writings in verse have not been found.[49] The interference was apparently limited to the Letters. In five *Limburg sermons* there are passages that exhibit parallels with the Letters. Most of these have been dealt with in chapter 2; the others are cited below in full:[50]

[46] On the ms. see Degering 1932, 5–6; Cf. Van Mierlo 1933, Van Mierlo 1934b (especially also figs. I–III) and Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 265. The dating of the script is Erik Kwakkel's (Van Mierlo dated it to the beginning of the 14th century). The owner's mark in this ms. (ed. Degering 1932, 5) has been erroneously attributed to the penitential nuns of Haguenau, but it is now clear that it belonged to the collection of the 'Sankt-Katharinaklause' in that city. I am grateful to Nigel F. Palmer (Oxford) for this information.

[47] Cf. Van Mierlo 1934b, especially 537–539 and figs. IV and V, and Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 265. The dating of the script is Erik Kwakkel's (Van Mierlo dated it to the 15th century).

[48] On the ms. see Meier 1899, 246–248 and Webster 2005, which is devoted entirely to ms. 277 from Einsiedeln. The dating of the script is based partially on the knowledge that the translation it contains of Mechthild von Magdeburg's *Fließende Licht der Gottheit* cannot have been written before the period 1343–1345 (Cf. Neumann 1987, 262–263). Erik Kwakkel and Karin Schneider date the script to ca. the middle of the 14th century (cf. Mulder & Kwakkel 2001, 159, Webster 2005, 36–37 and 2007, 261–264. For more on the Beguine houses of Einsiedeln, see Sommer-Ramer 1995, 661–667.

[49] Bosch 1975 does note a passage in Ls. 14 where a quotation is put in Bernard's mouth characterizing Mary as a *conduit* through which heavenly mercy flows to earth (Kern 1895, 331,23–25). The same image appears in Poem in Stanzas 28 (cf. Reynaert 1981, 159 n. 68), but this parallel is insufficiently specific for us to speak of a borrowing.

[50] For a more thorough treatment of the similarities between the Letters and *LS*, see Van Mierlo 1932, Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 2, 52–57 and Scheepsma 2000, 662–665.

– in the mosaic sermon Ls. 26, a proverb-like phrase is used by the transition from one component *St. Georgen sermon* to the next which is reminiscent of a passage from Letter 6. It is, however, quite possible that both texts are based on a familiar maxim by a Church Father.
– at the end of Ls. 31, *Dbuec van den palmboeme*, in the last and longest Middle Dutch interpolation (cited at § 2.3), there are a number of sentences that appear in more or less the same form in Letter 30:

> Want wi sijn cranc in doghene ende vlietich in ghenoechten. Ons connen lettel soe cleine dinc gheletten in vernoye, wi en legghen wel minne ghehouden inne ende vergheten haers te pleghene. Dat es groete cleynheit. Want men in alle uren der minnen ghenoech soude leven.[51]
>
> [For we are weak in virtue but zealous in pleasure. Some insignificant thing can annoy and grieve us to such a point that we put Love away and forget to serve her. This is great baseness. For at all hours we must content Love by our life.][52]

– in the opening of Ls. 39, *Dbuec van den boegarde*, there are a number of sentences, spread out over a longer passage, that also appear in Letter 1 and in the *Boengaert van der geesteleker herten*.
– the second half of Ls. 41, *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne*, corresponds for the most part to the text of Letter 10. This is a Middle Dutch translation, or rather paraphrase, of a chapter from (pseudo-)Richard of St. Victor's *Explicatio in Cantica canticorum*. Additionally, there are perhaps some similarities in contents between the opening of Ls. 41 and a passage from Letter 6.
– in Ls. 43, *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre*, there is a fairly lengthy passage that in large part agrees with a passage from Letter 18.

By far most of the passages mentioned above had already been identified by Van Mierlo. It is certainly not impossible that even more identical textual fragments will be found. My eye was drawn, for example, to the closing formula of Ls. 20, which does not appear in the Middle High German source: *Dar est gevugt lif in lif alse een lief, met enen wille ende met enen gebrukene ewelike te besittene. Daer ons allen Got tue brengen mute. Amen*. [There it is so that body and body are united as a beloved, with one will and possessed of eternal joy. May God grant this to us all. Amen.].[53] This

[51] Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 252:25–253:34.
[52] Transl. Hart 1980, 116.
[53] Kern 1895, 399:29–31.

independent Middle Dutch conclusion is in its phraseology particularly reminiscent of a passage from Hadewijch's Letter 30:

> Ende nieman el te doene dan den lieve met lieve selve, alse een lief in lief met enen seden, met enen sinnen, met eenre borst de andere te dore sughene die onghehoerde soetheit die sine pine verdient hevet. Ay, ja herte in herte te ghevoelene met eenre enigher herten ende ere enegher soeter minnen, ende woensamleke te ghebrukene ene volwassene minne.[54]
>
> [. . . live for no one else but for the Beloved in love alone, live in him as the loved one in the Beloved, with the same way of acting, with one spirit, and with one heart; and in one another to taste the unheard-of sweetness he merited by his sufferings. Oh yes! To feel heart in heart, with one single heart and one single sweet love, and continually have fruition of one full-grown love.][55]

The similarities are certainly not such that we may suspect direct borrowing, but the affinity is undeniable. A number of lines from this same Letter were also incorporated into the long concluding interpolation in Ls. 31.

It is to begin with important to observe that the connection between Hadewijch's Letters and the *Limburg sermons* are not restricted to manuscript H. Several of the parallels noted here also appear elsewhere in the y2 transmission, for example in manuscript Br1. We may thus conclude that the probable intereference between the *Limburg sermons* and the Letters had already taken place at stage H*, which can be dated to the last quarter of the thirteenth century. The possible interchange between the two textual corpuses may thus be attributed to the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*.

The key question is of course how these intriguing intertextual connections between the two old Middle Dutch prose conglomerates came about. In principle there are three possibilities: Hadewijch borrowed from the *Limburg sermons*, the *Limburg sermons* borrowed from Hadewijch, or Hadewijch and the *Limburg sermons* borrowed from one or more common sources.

Hardly any historical facts concerning Hadewijch are known, but according to prevailing opinion she was the leader of a small, elite community of highly educated Beguines in Brabant around the middle of the thirteenth century. It goes without saying that her literary activities

[54] Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 257:136–142.
[55] Transl. Hart 1980, 118.

fall within the same period, which would make Hadewijch one of the very first writing *mulieres religiosae*.[56] It was especially Van Mierlo who gave shape to this profile of Hadewijch in a number of publications and editions. For him there was no doubt concerning the question posed above: the anonymous compiler of the *Limburg sermons* obviously made use of the Hadewijch's Letters. Van Mierlo gave a much earlier date to the Middle Dutch sermon collection than J.H. Kern, namely ca. 1300 (see § 1.1), but this still put the advent of the *Limburg sermons* half a century after the presumed activities of Hadewijch. The new dating of the *Limburg sermons* to the late thirteenth century has therefore hardly any consequences for Van Mierlo's theories.

Van Mierlo even went so far as to designate Hadewijch as the founder of Germanic mysticism, whereby she would have had a far-reaching influence upon mystic masters such as Meister Eckhart.[57] That Hadewijch's lore of *minne* should have had a direct influence on the much more intellectually-oriented Dominican mystic is a view held by scarcely anyone these days.[58] In the Middle High German transmission of Hadewijch, which he himself largely discovered, Van Mierlo obviously found an extra argument for the powerful thirteenth-century emanation of the works of this Brabantine Beguine to the German-speaking areas.[59] If her influence had already extended into the Rhineland in the thirteenth century, he reasoned, then it was very likely indeed that Hadewijch's dominant presence had left traces in the *Limburg sermons* as well. It is however much more likely that the Adelwip transmission took place in the fourteenth century, in the wake of intensive contacts between Ruusbroec and Groenendaal on the one hand, and the friends of God at Basel and Strasbourg on the other (see § 4.6).

There are a number of comments to be made on the prevailing opinion concerning the relationship between Hadewijch's Letters and the *Limburg sermons*. In the first place there is, at least from the Middle Dutch perspective, the extreme antiquity of the transmission of the *Limburg sermons*. Hadewijch's literary activities are, it is true, datable by means of the ancient manuscript H, but the manuscript transmission

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[56] The most recent sytheses of Hadewijch are Mommaers 1989, Dinzelbacher 1994, 203–208 (who on p. 203 proffers the possibility that Hadewijch was active ca. 1300), Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 158–232 and McGinn 1991–…, vol. 3, 200–222.

[57] Van Mierlo 1927, especially 25–37.

[58] Cf. McGinn 2001, 44 and 181; some few similarities between Hadewijch and Eckhart are noted here based on contents (pp. 47 and 62).

[59] See Van Mierlo 1933, Van Mierlo 1934b and Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 265–276.

of her oeuvre is considerably younger. The oldest corpus manuscript, A, dates from the second quarter of the fourteenth century, while Mazarine 920, containing the Letters 6 and 10, is about as old. The Middle High German manuscript Berlin mgo 12 could also be dated to this period. There is thus a gap of some seventy years between the presumed date of Hadewijch's literary activities and the transmission of her works. The divide is only partially bridged by manuscript H, in which reminiscences of five of her Letters occur. In not a single one of the passages in the *Limburg sermons* that are parallel in part or whole with Hadewijch's Letters is she ever mentioned by name. This need not be significant—in the first half of Ls. 41, which comprises a summary of *De diligendo Deo*, Bernard of Clairvaux's name is not so much as mentioned—but it does put into perspective somewhat the fame that Hadewijch purportedly enjoyed as a teacher of mysticism in the Netherlands.

The parallel passages between the Letters and the *Limburg sermons* are rather uneven in nature. The similarities range from a few more or less related loose phrases that appear in a different context, to a text that runs parallel for pages. Of the latter we know of just one instance, and that is at the same time the most problematic case. In 1943 Schalij had already demonstrated that the second half of Ls. 41 and Letter 10 both provide a Middle Dutch paraphrase of a chapter from the *Explicatio in Cantica canticorum*. Whoever at that time wished to maintain that Hadewijch was the 'Urheber' of Letter 10, had not only to acknowledge her as the author of Middle Dutch mysticism, but as the translator of Latin mystical theology as well. Van Mierlo, for whom Hadewijch was in every respect the greatest figure, did this without reservation.[60] But is it really so likely that in the often inflexible world of medieval relations women, in other words, *illiterati*, would have had the opportunity to translate Latin texts, even assuming that they would have been capable of doing so?[61] According to the sources some *mulieres religiosae* from the thirteenth century did possess a remarkable degree of theological knowledge—Beatrice of Nazareth, for example, loved to read about the Trinity—but that is an altogether different matter to the independent translation and dissemination of Latin works of mystical

[60] Van Mierlo 1944, especially 226–227; cf. Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 2, 39–51.

[61] On Hadewijch and her knowledge of Latin sources see Willaert 1987; on her use of the Bible see Reynaert 1987.

theology. Given that of the vernacular writings of thirteenth-century women from the southern Netherlands there exist almost exclusively Latin adaptations—the autobiographical sketches of Beatrice, the notes by the friend from Liège of Juliana of Cornillon, the visions of the Beguine from Tongeren etc. (see § 1.5)—then it is not very reasonable to assume that in such a climate women could produce translations of theological treatises. On the other hand, most translations are anonymous and it cannot be discounted that women were involved in their production. For the time being it seems nevertheless more likely that the chapter from the *Explicatio in Canticum canticorum* was translated into Middle Dutch by a trained person—for example someone working in the pastoral care of mystically inspired women—and that this translation, possibly adapted by Hadewijch, found its way into the corpus of Letters.

Based on the study of variants, Schalij concluded that Letter 10 and Ls. 41 were each based independently on an older Middle Dutch translation of the *Explicatio*.[62] Van Mierlo was able to punch a few holes in her argument, but defended Hadewijch's authenticity so heatedly that other possibilities were not seriously considered.[63] That a Middle Dutch translation of the *Explicatio* already existed when the *Limburg sermons* and the Letters of Hadewijch were written gains credence from the existence of the fifteenth-century manuscript The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2412–2413 (see § 2.7). This manuscript contains the *Explicatio*-translation in a redaction that has affinities with both Letter 10 and Ls. 41 and moreover has an independent interpolation that appears in neither of the other texts. The existence of this otherwise unattested text justifies the suspicion that a Middle Dutch paraphrase of the *Explicatio* did indeed exist quite separately from the Letters and the *Limburg sermons*, and that it went all the way back to the thirteenth century. All in all it seems most likely to me that it was not Hadewijch's Letter 10 that was incorporated into Ls. 41, but rather the previously existing Middle Dutch paraphrase of the *Explicatio*. More or less the same text wound up in Hadewijch's corpus of letters, then, whereby from a stylistic point of view Letter 10 provides by far the best reading—a fact that Van Mierlo did not hesitate to stress.

[62] Schalij 1943a.
[63] Van Mierlo 1944.

The longest but one of the parallel passages appears in Ls. 43 and Letter 18. This letter contains a sophisticated theological discussion which deals among other things with the eyes of the soul, which symbolize *minne* and reason. At this point Letter 18 paraphrases parts of William of St. Thierry's *De nature et dignitate amoris* [On the nature and dignity of love].[64] Next follows the passage on the eyes of affection with which one is to gaze upon God, which also appears in Ls. 43. The *Limburg sermon* speaks however of the *ogen der pensinge* [eyes of contemplation], does not use the term 'affection', and exhibits a number of further differences with Letter 18 (see § 2.9). If the author of Ls. 43 was here indeed working from Hadewijch's letter, then he was citing from it very loosely. In this case, too, it would seem more likely that Letter 18 and Ls. 43 each independently made use of an already existing text that was in keeping with the ideas of William of St. Thierry. Apparently there already existed in the second half of the thirteenth-century Middle Dutch texts that elaborated on Latin mystical theology, like the first part of Ls. 41, which provides a schematic summary of *De diligendo Deo*. Both the circle in which the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* move and the mystical community surrounding Hadewijch, then, came into contact with such texts.

The parallel passage between Ls. 39 and Letter 1 is a complicated case, though it is comprised of just three loose phrases. It is in fact a three-way relationship, involving the *Boengaert van der geesteleker herten* from the Paris manuscript Mazarine 920 as well. The latter text, despite the corrupt condition in which it has come down to us, is the closest to a lost letter which also formed the basis for the first part of Ls. 39. This mystical letter was thus written in the thirteenth century, by someone who preferred not to reveal his identity on parchment. The question of whether this lost letter could have been the work of Hadewijch is answered in the negative by all specialists (see § 2.5). The similarities between Letter 1, Ls. 39 and *Boengaert*, on the other hand, are denied by no one. It is the *communis opinio* that Ls. 39 and the *Boengaert* were inspired by Hadewijch's Letter 1, but it is certainly just as likely that all three texts were based on this mysterious lost letter, the clearest glimpse of which is provided by the *Boengart*. The secretive final sentences refer to the existence of a late thirteenth-century circle of mystics within which communication was sometimes conducted by letter, but whose members

[64] See Van Mierlo 1929 and also Van der Zeyde 1934, 128–129 and 160.

did not think it expedient to draw too much attention to themselves.[65] It would seem that the author of Ls. 39 (and possibly the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*), and the producers of (a part of) manuscript Mazarine 920, as well as Hadewijch had ties to this unknown circle.

For the remaining, briefer parallels between the Letters and the *Limburg sermons* the similarities are sometimes striking, but it is exceptionally difficult to determine with any precision who borrowed what from whom. Now that the extreme age of the *Limburg sermons* tradition has been proven, it can no longer be discounted that the Letters might have drawn upon the corpus of sermons. The entrenched notion that Hadewijch was the donor stems primarily from the seemingly unassailable image of Hadewijch that has persisted for decades. It is taken almost as a given that Hadewijch was active ca. 1250, but that dating is at best poorly substantiated. The scanty evidence for this is largely derived from the *Lijst der volmaakten*, which may be seen as an elucidation of Vision 14.[66] The authenticity of this text is not undisputed.[67] Moreover, the question remains whether a text that claims to be a list of all the perfect that have existed in the past, present and future can be regarded as a historical source. The most concrete reference in the *Lijst* is the mention of an anonymous Beguine who was condemned to burn at the stake by Robert le Bougre.[68] Given the fact that this hunter of heretics was active in the Netherlands in the years 1236–1239, this entry offers a *terminus post quem* for the *Lijst der volmaakten* of ca. 1240, and therefore implicitly as well for the activities of Hadewijch. But how long after this date her activities extended is impossible to determine.[69]

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[65] De Bruin 1940, 68; cited at § 2.5.

[66] Ed. Dros & Willaert 1996, 150–163; commentary on pp. 207–213.

[67] Van Mierlo 1924–1925, vol. 2, 64–66 doubted it, but decided to include the *Lijst* in the Hadewijch corpus. Reynaert 1981, 427–428 considers the *Lijst* an authentic work of the author of the Visions.

[68] Dros & Willaert 1996, 160,192–194; cf. pp. 14 and 212.

[69] A number of other indications in the *Lijst der volmaakten* have spawned theories about the dating of Hadewijch. The identity of lord Hendrik of Breda, who according to the *Lijst* was sent by Hadewijch (?) to Saxony to visit the anchoress Mine (Dros & Willaert 1996, 158:176–178; Cf. p. 212), has long been sought after, but thusfar no one has been able to figure out who she is referring to here (see among others Boeren 1962, Boeren 1965 and Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 162–163). This entry can therefore hardly be used to date Hadewijch's life and literary activities. The *Lijst* mentions further seven anchorites who lived on the walls of Jerusalem (Dros & Willaert 1996, 160:195–199; Cf. p. 212). According to Brandsma 1925–1926, 250–256 it was hardly possible to live as a Christian in the Holy City after its fall in 1244; the *Lijst* would therefore have to have been written before 1244 and thus Hadewijch's oeuvre would have to be dated to about that period. Now, in the first place there is the question of how Hadewijch

An argument frequently proffered for the dating of Hadewijch to the middle of the thirteenth century that is based on contents is that she was well versed in the culture of the chivalric world and courtly love.[70] This is supposed to be especially evident from her Poems in Stanzas, which are closely related to the lyrics of the *trouvères* of northern France, especially their Marian lyrics. Because of these affinities in form and contents, attempts have been made to situate Hadewijch's activities at about the time of the high-point of the trouvère lyric, which was about the middle of the thirteenth century. But Volker Mertens has shown that there is no compelling reason why she could not have been a follower in this regard, rather than a pioneer.[71] Hadewijch used French models and there are no indications that she had any influence on the trouvères. The melodies for which she wrote her lyrics could still have been popular long after the hey-day of the trouvères. There is at any rate one example: for Poem in Stanzas 21 Hadewijch used a melody that was also employed by Jehan le Court Brisebarre. He came from Douai and was active in the first half of the fourteenth century.[72]

These observations dovetail nicely with a proposal of Reynaert's, who would rather see Hadewijch situated in a second florescence of courtly love mysticism that falls in the second half of the thirteenth century.[73] The first flowering of this literary genre occurred in the second half of the twelfth century and was comprised mainly of clerical authors, like Richard of St. Victor, who wrote in Latin. A striking exception to this is the Canticle paraphrase by Landeric of Wabban (1176–1181), which was written in Old French (see § 3.4). The second florescence manifested itself in the second half of the thirteenth century and was comprised mainly of vernacular (female) authors, among who may be mentioned—apart from Hadewijch—Mechtild von Magdeburg and

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and her circle knew about these anchorites. Aren't we dealing here with a legendary story? Moreover, Hendrix 1978b, 140–141 justly argues that the entry in the *Lijst* could also refer to a later period, when relations had improved, the Christian pilgrimages had been resumed, and anchorites could once again live in Jerusalem. Hendrix 1978b is incidentally entirely devoted to the question of whether the *Lijst* might not contain evidence for the dating of Hadewijch to the end of the 13th century; he recieves to a certain extent support for this theory from Reynaert 1980, 281–284.

[70] Most recently Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 164–166.

[71] Cf. Mertens 2000.

[72] On Brisebarre see Willaert 1984, 241 (no. 11) and Grijp 1993, 81–82; cf. Mertens 2000, 682. Leafing through Jeanroy 1965, an overview of the mss. containing OF lyrics, encounters predominantly specimens from the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th century; apparently these lyrics were still very popular at that time.

[73] Reynaert 1994.

Margaretha Porete. Further there are a number of anonymous Old French texts from this period, stemming especially from Walloon and northern France, which may be associated with a renewed interest in erotically-oriented mysticism (see § 4.4 en 4.5).

The less than convincing arguments for a dating of Hadewijch around the middle of the thirteenth century, together with Reynaert's theories, provide room for a new historical assessment of the Brabantine mystic. I have therefore proposed—perhaps somewhat provocatively—to consider an old theory anew, one that seeks to identify Hadewijch the author as Heilwich Bloemarts of Brussels (1270/77–1335).[74] This unmarried woman of high birth bought in the period 1305–1318 several Beguine houses in the vicinity of the St. Goedele church in Brussels. Heilwich Bloemarts is usually identified as the heretic and Beguine leader Bloemaerdinne, about whom the canon regular Henricus Pomerius (†1469) writes in his *De origine monasterii Viridisvallis*.[75] In the life of Jan van Ruusbroec contained therein Pomerius reports that the Brussels curate and mystic author had taken great pains to combat the heresies of Bloemaerdinne. Pomerius claims to have read the writings of Bloemaerdinne himself. In that context it is of great importance that in Pomerius' day the corpus manuscripts A and B were available at Rooklooster and that C resided at the monastery of canons regular of Bethlehem near Leuven—to the brothers of which monastery Pomerius dedicated his history of Groenendaal! The Bloemaerdinne theory has the important advantage that it situates the mysterious figure Hadewijch better historically. Moreover, it makes it easier to account for why the transmission of Hadewijch's only starts to gain steam in the fourteenth century and why it is so highly concentrated in the Brabantine convents in the vicinity of Brussels. Heilwich Bloemarts lived namely on the Loxemstraat in that city, on the same street as Jan van Ruusbroec. It goes without saying that a great deal of research into the historical and social circumstances in Brabant and Brussels in the first half

[74] The connection between Hadewijch and Heilwich Bloemarts was first made by Ruelens 1905; it was developed further by among others Nelis 1925. For counterarguments see Van Mierlo 1926. Many new historical facts concerning Heilwich Bloemarts and her family are to be found in Martens 1990, who avoids, however, any mention of a connection with Hadewijch.

[75] Ed. De Leu 1885, 286–287 (ch. 5); cf. the MDu. translation of this work (ed. Verdeyen 1981, 139).

of the fourteenth century is necessary to provide the Bloemaerdinne hypothesis with a more solid foundation.[76]

It is not my purpose here to transfer in one fell swoop the entire oeuvre attributed to Hadewijch to Heilwich Bloemarts. It is worth considering, however, that Heilwich was the key figure in a mystic/literary network in which texts were read, collected, and written by its various participants. This brings me to a second criticism of the prevailing view of Hadewijch. This is a view that is still influenced by late Romantic notions concerning the lonely creative genius, notions that were very much in play with Van Mierlo. The fact that Hadewijch's were preserved three times as an entire corpus obviously supports the impression that we are dealing with a unified literary entity. It remains the question, however, whether this fixed transmission, seen from the medieval perspective, must necessarily be so emphatically associated with just one author. Should not we rather think of a collection of texts comprised of pieces of varying nature, pieces which bear the same mark in terms of style and contents, but which were not necessarily all written by the same author? The corpus attributed to Hadewijch could also be a reflex of the literary activities of a religious circle. The register of Hadewijch's Poems in Stanzas has until now been viewed in particular as the expression of a strong individual creative force.[77] But it is precisely features such as the use of fixed forms and formulas and the variation of familiar themes that allows for multiple authorship. The textual history of the Poems in couplets clearly reveals that something like a literary tradition had developed. Manuscript A contains the series 1–16, which are attributed to Hadewijch by all experts. The younger manuscripts B and C add to these Poems in couplets 17–29, but this series is reputed to be the work of imitators.[78]

Surrounding the corpus of Hadewijch's Letters there are also a number of questions concerning their authenticity and genesis. There are various theories concerning the status of the intended audience of

[76] Cf. Warnar 2003, 69–80 and Sleiderink 2003, 121.

[77] On the register of Hadewijch's Poems in Stanzas see Willaert 1984 and Willaert 1993.

[78] Opinion on the authorship of the Poems in Couplets is divided. Murk Jansen 1991, which is devoted entirely to this group of texts, posits that Poems in Couplets 17–24 are Hadewijch's but nos. 25–29 are not. But Van Mierlo 1952, XXVII–XXIX and 185–186, Reynaert 1981, 434–437 and Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 182 and 187–191 deny that Poems in Couplets 17–29 are Hadewijch's.

Hadewijch's collection of Letters.[79] Some posit that in the Letters we can see the reflex of a kind of letter book in which the author herself collected copies of her correspondence. Once compiled, it would have been brought into circulation as a more or less integral whole.[80] A chronology of sorts does indeed seem to be present in the extant collection, for there are frequent references in some Letters to theme's discussed in preceding ones. But there are also Letters that do not appear to be in the correct order, such as number thirty-one.[81] Both kinds of irregularity could be accounted for by positing the intervention of an editor, who would then have put Hadewijch's letter book into circulation. And yet I doubt whether the collection of Letters may really be seen as a reflection of a letter book kept by Hadewijch. It seems more likely that one or more recipients of correspondence by Hadewijch collected what was available, perhaps after her death, made a selection from this and arranged the pieces in a meaningful order.[82] This would also account well for the observed irregularities.

Most of the Letters could have been addressed to one and the same person, who is usually addressed by the author as *lieve kint* [dear child] or in similar terms. On the other hand, the mystic level of the letters is not always consistently high, as if the author had different addressees in mind. Perhaps the person being addressed, unmistakably a woman, represented a religious circle; sometimes Hadewijch speaks in the plural. There is certainly one text with a different addressee altogether, namely Letter 12, which is addressed to a male leader of a religious community. If it was indeed the recipients of the Letters who compiled the corpus, then we are dealing with at least two different people or groups. The material for the collection of Letters, then, would have been gathered

[79] See among others Van der Zeyde 1934, 120–136, Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 2, 7–13, Reynaert 1975, 236–238 and Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 209–212.

[80] Thinking along these lines are Reynaert 1975, 236–238 and presumably also Van der Zeyde 1934, 132, given their absolute rejection of the alternative that the recipients of the Letters collected them after the fact.

[81] Cf. on the chronology, see Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 2, 9.

[82] Three times for certain in the 12th and 13th centuries a selection was made from the rich epistolary corpus of Hildegard of Bingen, that numbers some 300 items, which were then preserved as independent letter books of Hildegard: ms. Vienna, ÖNB, cod. 88, dating to 1164–1170, with 174 letters; ms. Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, cod. theol. phil. 253, dating to 1154–1170, with 136 letters, and ms. Berlin, SPK, cod. lat. 674, 13th century, with 56 letters. In these mss. Hildegard's texts were reordered, rewritten and extraneous material sometimes added (see Meier 1981, 1273–1274).

from different points of the compass, which might well have resulted in the inclusion of texts not written by Hadewijch.

There appear to be strong differences of opinion on the authenticity of the thirty-one Letters. In our discussion of Letter 10 we saw how Van Mierlo was never willing to doubt the integrity of the entire corpus, even when it involved a translation from Latin that at best could only have been adapted by Hadewijch.[83] There are more texts whose authenticity is disputed. Letter 28 in particular has proven to be a bone of contention. Van der Zeyde had already identified this text as one of the Letters that should certainly not be attributed to Hadewijch, but Van Mierlo ignored her ideas.[84] Later, however, Reynaert and Ruh also came to the conclusion that Letter 28 was not authentic, particularly because of its speculative contents, which is far removed from Hadewijch's Love mysticism.[85] Willaert continued to defend the originality of this controversial Letter, however.[86] Ultimately Van der Zeyde went the furthest in her sifting of the Letter collection, for she put three complete texts on the list of inauthentic works, namely Letter 10 (justifiably so, as would appear later, for this is a translation), Letter 15 and Letter 28.[87] She further identified inauthentic passages in other Letters, which Hadewijch is supposed to have borrowed from other texts. Van der Zeyde did not concern herself with the question of where the 'inauthentic' Letters came from. She apparently assumed that Hadewijch herself was responsible for their insertion amongst the Letters.

Although Van der Zeyde goes to extremes in her stylistic assessment of the authenticity of (fragments of) texts, she does have an interesting theory about the corpus of Letters. She maintains that Hadewijch must have used different sources for her Letters, and leaves open the possibility that prose by other authors was added to the corpus of Letters. From a historical standpoint this seems reasonable. Contrary to what Van der Zeyde assumes, I suspect that the recipients of the Letters played a decisive role in the construction of the current collection. The compilation of Letters would in that case have a background somewhat similar

[83] Cf. Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 2, 16–17.
[84] Van der Zeyde 1934, 126–129; cf. the damning response to this book by Van Mierlo 1934a.
[85] Reynaert 1975, 225–238, Reynaert 1980, 287–291, Reynaert 1981, 425–427 and Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 225–230, respectively.
[86] Willaert 1980.
[87] Van der Zeyde 1934, 120–132.

to that of the *Limburg sermons* (which include at least an authentic letter, incorporated into Ls. 39). There, too, a collection of Middle Dutch mystic prose is gathered together within a larger whole, whereby the texts to a certain degree have been adapted or combined. That the compiler of the corpus of Hadewijch's Letters and the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* sometimes seem to have drawn from the same sources becomes less surprising when seen against that background.

Ultimately I have arrived at the conclusion that the interaction between Hadewijch's Letters and the *Limburg sermons* can best be explained by the use of common sources. By the end of the thirteenth century there must already have existed a corpus of sorts of Middle Dutch prose texts of a mystic-religious nature, that was used both by the authors of the *Limburg sermons* and Hadewijch and her circle. If we do indeed shift the dating of Hadewijch's works forward in time, then the advent of the *Limburg sermons* and the compilation of the corpus of Letters come closer together. That both corpuses include the Middle Dutch paraphrase of the *Explicatio*, based on an existing source, makes this reconstruction even more likely. The existence of this *Explicatio* translation, however, tends to make the most important direct connection between the *Limburg sermons* and the Letters much less certain. What remains is a few fairly brief parallel phrases common to both the Letters and the *Limburg sermons*, that betray an interest in the same kinds of themes. Word choice and imagery point in at least one instance to an indisputable intertextual relationship, but in practice it can scarcely be determined who borrowed from whom. With a later dating of Hadewijch in mind, the Letters could just as well have borrowed from the *Limburg sermons*.

Whether the connection between the sermon collection and the Letters of Hadewijch also implies that the *Limburg sermons*, too, have a Brabantine background—whereby the possibly Maasland product, manuscript H, would prove in that respect to be even more of an odd man out—remains a matter of debate. Hadewijch's Brabantine background is undisputed and Beatrice of Nazareth also lived in a Brabantine convent. In the fourteenth century this duchy developed into even more of a center of Middle Dutch mystic literature, when Jan van Ruusbroec and authors after him such as Jan van Leeuwen and Willem Jordaens established themselves there. Practically the entire Middle Dutch transmission of Hadewijch's works was concentrated in these circles as well. The *Limburg sermons*, too, appear to have been disseminated especially in Brabant. It is therefore becoming more and

more likely that the roots of the *Limburg sermons* are to be sought in this region.

There is moreover intriguing paleographical evidence that connects manuscript H with the Hadewijch transmission, namely the common use of a number of rare abbreviations. By way of qualification it must be noted that too little is known about abbreviations in Middle Dutch manuscripts for us to be able to assess the true meaning of such phenomena.[88] Nevertheless I would not deny the reader the following observations. In his edition of the *Limburg sermons* Kern notes a few unusual abbreviations that appear in manuscript H: m^e and m^n for *minne* and *minnen*, M^{-} for *mensche* and sp^i for *sprict* (= *loquitur*).[89] The abbreviation M^e for *mensche* had also been found by Wilhelm Wackernagel in manuscript Z containing the *St. Georgen sermons*. According to him it is typical for ascetic and mystical literature of the fourteenth century from both German and Dutch regions.[90] My attention was drawn especially to the abbreviations incorporating an *m* with superscript *e* or *n* for *minne* and *minnen*. Those who are somewhat familiar with the philology of Hadewijch know that these abbreviations occur frequently in the oldest manuscripts, A and B. Because *minne* is a central concept in Middle Dutch mysticism, the suspicion arose that we could be dealing with a kind of secret sign. It goes without saying that in a religious community in which mystical love was a central theme, it could readily represented in an abbreviated form.

Manuscript H is by far the oldest witness to the abbreviations for *minne* and *minnen*, which appear there on the very first page and are used throughout with complete naturalness (fig. 20). Apparently the scribe of H could assume that its intended users would have no difficulty with these otherwise less than obvious abbreviations. This would seem to indicate that this method of abbreviation already existed in Middle

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[88] On MDu. abbreviations, see especially Lieftinck 1954. Herman Mulder (KB Brussels) is currently preparing a dissertation on systems of abbreviation in MDu. mss.

[89] Kern 1895, 2. An abbreviation not mentioned by Kern, but which is worth mentioning, is *co-* for *coninc* [king] (Kern 1895, 582:13); For more on this abbreviation, which also occurs in some MDu. romances, see Lieftinck 1954. It is also striking that the abbreviation *p-* for *predikere* [preacher] is introduced gradually by the scribe of H in Ls. 16, a text in which both sermon and preacher are of central importance (see § 3.2). At first he writes the form *predikere* in full, but from Kern 1895, 357:17 on he uses the abbreviation (e.g. at 358:16 and 25).

[90] In Wackernagel & Rieger 1964, 262; Cf. Kern 1895, 2. Wackernagel constructs, however, a circular argument here: he only cites the edition by Zacher 1842b as the only MDu. witness, where two *Limburg sermons* are edited based on manuscript H.

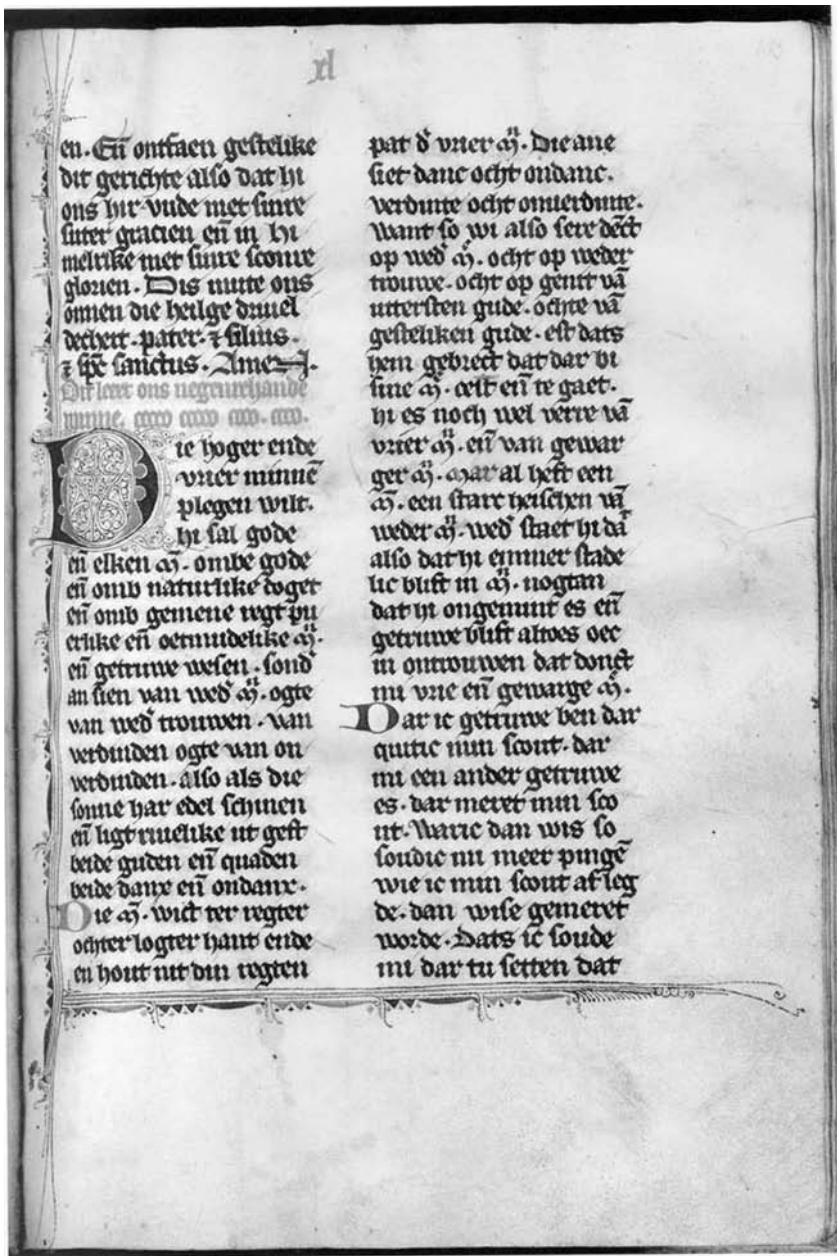

Fig. 20. MS The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 70 E 5, f. 183r. Opening page of Ls. 41, with several abbreviations for *minne* and *mensche*.

Dutch. It is virtually certain that this technique was not copied from the Middle High German exemplars. A sampling of a number of the older manuscripts containing the *St. Georgen sermons* did not turn up a single example of these abbreviations for *minne/minnen*. Nor could specialists in the transmission of mystical literature in German provide any examples.[91] We appear to be dealing here, then, with a uniquely Middle Dutch practice, with which the scribe of H—and apparently his readers, as well—was familiar at the end of the thirteenth century. Incidentally, the abbreviation for *mensche* does not occur in the older *St. Georgen sermons* manuscripts either, except in Z. In this respect too, then, the scribe of H could also have been operating on his own initiative.[92]

My sampling is based on Seidel's codicological collection of prints from the *St. Georgen sermons* transmission.[93] The facsimiles it contains (only a few pages from each manuscript) were examined for the occurrence of the abbreviations in question. In G (second half thirteenth century) neither *minne/minnen* nor *mensche/menschen* appear in abbreviated form.[94] In F (first half fourteenth century), which contains a mosaic of the seven passion sermons under the title *Von unsers herre geburte*, the terms *minne* and *mensche* are written out in full, sometimes with the aid of a suspension for a nasal.[95] W (1363) consistently writes *mensche/menschen* out in full (though sometimes nasals are abbreviated); *minne* is here as a rule represented by *liebe*, but where *minne* is used, it is unabbreviated. N (1372) does not abbreviate *mensche*; the term *minne* is usually substituted for here by *liebe*. A (1387) writes both *mentsch/mentschen* and *minne* out in full, but uses in both cases sometimes the nasal suspension.[96] Z (second half fourteenth century) does not employ any abbreviations for *minne; mensche* does occur with some degree of frequency in its abbreviated form.[97] In U (end fourteenth

[91] I would like to thank Freimut Löser (Augsburg), Nigel Palmer (Oxford), Regina D. Schiewer (Augsburg) and Kurt Otto Seidel (Essen) for their contribution to the discussion of this subject.

[92] Lieftinck 1936, 124 notes that the *mensche* abbreviation occurs in the Tauler manuscript Berlin, SPK, mgo 188 form 1490. According to Lieftinck this abbreviation was copied from the exemplar, given the fact that it was no longer current after 1400.

[93] Seidel 1982a. Where the prints provide no decisive answer because the abbreviations in question do not appear in them, I rely on the information provided me by Kurt Otto Seidel (Essen).

[94] I also consulted Rieder 1908, Tafel II.

[95] This manuscript is not included in Seidel 1982a, but the University of Leiden library does possess a microfilm. The term *mensche* is found on nearly every page; *minne* occurs a number of times, for example, on f. 92r, where the fifth reason for Christ's incarnation is given (Cf. Kern 1895, 470:18–28).

[96] I also consulted Rieder 1908, Tafel I.

[97] Wackernagel & Rieger 1964, 262.

century) *mensche/menschen* are not abbreviated (though some nasal suspensions are employed); *liebe* is used to represent the concept *minne*.

The abbreviations for *minne* and *minnen* are frequently used in both of the Hadewijch manuscripts A and B—but not the one for *mensche*. The younger manuscript B is an exact copy of A and perhaps therefore uses these abbreviations. In texts added later to this codex this abbreviation has not been employed. Nor do we find the abbreviations for *minne* and *minnen* in C, either. Based on the picture these three corpus manuscripts present, we might conclude that these abbreviations were common in the first half of the fourteenth century, but that they tend to disappear thereafter. Manuscript Mazarine 920, which, like A, stems from the first half of the fourteenth century, qualifies this picture somewhat. The *minne* abbreviations do indeed occur in some composite manuscripts, but not in part VI, which includes Letter 6 and Letter 10. In the Middle High German Adelwip manuscripts we encounter the characteristic abbreviation for *mensche*, but not that for *minne/minnen*.

The abbreviations for *minne* and *minnen* are distributed as follows throughout the Hadewijch transmission. Manuscript A (1325–1350) uses the abbreviations m^{e} for *minne* and m^{n} for *minnen* very regularly, though not consistently. In the Poems in Stanzas it occurs even in rhyme position (f. 96vb line 7) (fig. 21). In B (second quarter fourteenth century) these abbreviations also occur frequently. In the bit added to B containing the Poems in couplets 17–29 and the *Twee-vormich traktaetken*, however, the *minne* abbreviations no longer occur. In C (third quarter of the fourteenth century) no trace remains of this system of abbreviation. The composite manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, 920 contains a number of parts in which the *minne* abbreviations do occur, for example in part I (1350–1375), containing Ruusbroec's *Vanden seven sloten* (e.g. fol. 32v: *minnen* and *minne*). In part V (1325–1350) however, containing among other things the *Boengaert van der geesteleker herten*, the phenomenon does not occur (e.g. fol. 98r: *minne*). Nor are there any hits in part VI (1325–1350), containing Letters 6 and 10. In the Adelwip manuscript Berlin mgo 12, *mensche* is indeed abbreviated to *.M.*, but the abbreviations for *minne* and *minnen* do not occur.[98] Nor did I find the abbreviation for *minne* in MS Einsiedeln, Stiftbibliothek, 277, which contains a few Hadewijch fragments.[99]

[98] Cf. Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 2, 265–266.

[99] This is not evident in the edition by Gooday 1973, who silently expands the abbreviations in ms. Einsiedeln, though it is in the microfilm copy of this manuscript held in the University of Leiden library.

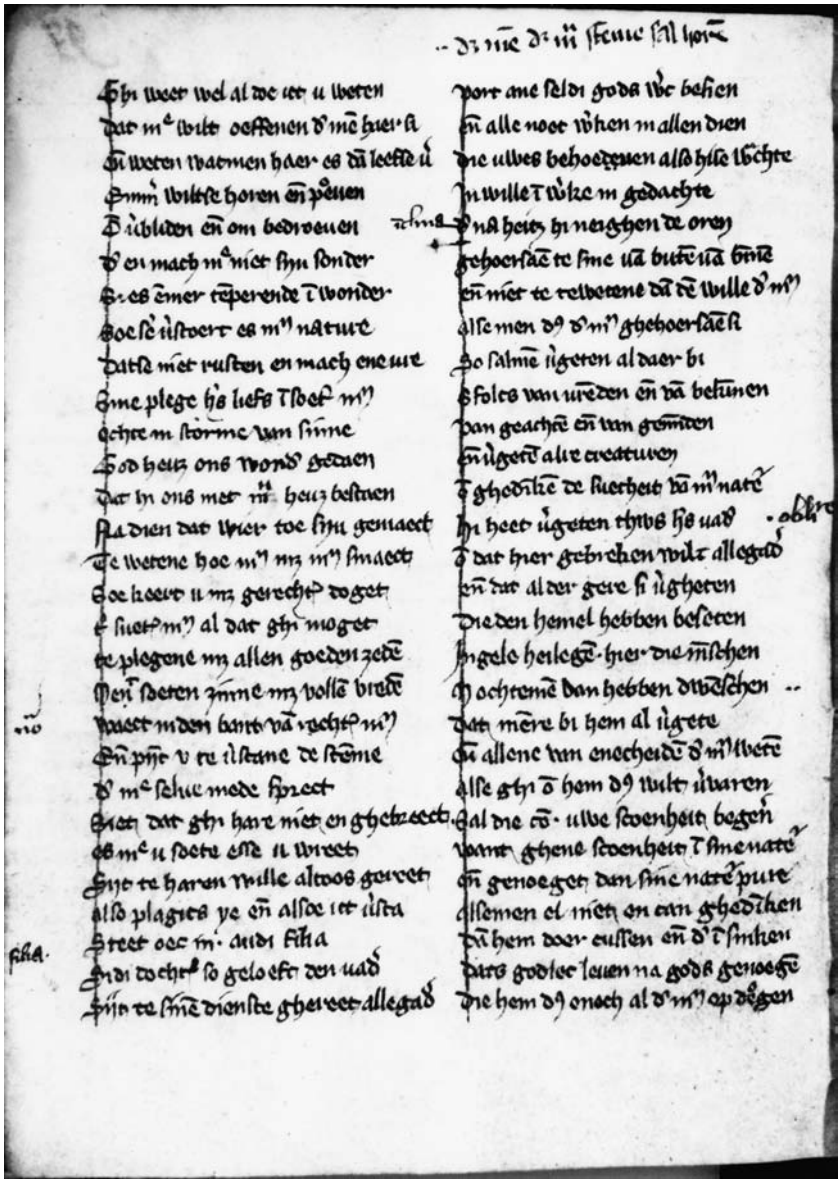

Fig. 21. MS Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2879–80, f. 96v. A page from Hadewijch MS A, in which the abbreviation for *minne* appears in rhyme position (column b, line 7).

Based on these findings we must abandon the hypothesis that the abbreviations for *minne* and *minnen* served as special indicators within a circle of mystic insiders, to which both Hadewijch and her circle as well as the first readers of the *Limburg sermons* would have belonged. It is especially the early manuscript Mazarine 920 that gives cause for doubt: some composite parts have the abbreviation, but others containing especially the Hadewijch texts do not. If something like a mystic movement had existed in which standard abbreviations for the concept of *minne* circulated, then we would certainly have expected to find them in this ancient Hadewijch manuscript. We are probably dealing instead with certain scribal conventions that are associated with a particular time and region, and perhaps as well with a particular milieu. The abbreviations for *minne* and *minnen* appear, as far as can be determined at this point in time, primarily in fourteenth-century Brabantine manuscripts with mystico-religious contents.[100] More research will have to be done in order to explain this paleographical phenomenon more fully.[101] At this juncture it is enough to observe that manuscript H has this remarkable system of abbreviation in common with a number of fourteenth-century manuscripts from Brabant. And that is yet another piece of evidence linking the early *Limburg sermons* tradition to this ancient duchy.

4.3 Minne *and Mysticism*

De Middle Dutch interpolations in the Palm Tree treatise (Ls. 31) provide us with insights into the world of ideas of the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*, because it is especially in this translation of a *St. Georgen sermon* that his own vision of the religious life emerges (see § 2.3). One aspect of this that has not yet been strongly emphasized is the clear fascination for the mystery of the mystical experience. The Middle High German source text describes the meeting between the

[100] The only known exception hitherto is ms. Gent, UB, 693, written in 1480 by sister Martine van Woelputte in the monastery of St. Margaretha at Bergen op Zoom. On this ms. see De Vreese 1900–1902, 55–70 (Ruusbroec ms. G); on the abbreviations in this ms. see also Alaerts 2002, 144–145.

[101] These findings are based on the collection of materials pertaining to this unique paleographical phenomenon that I compiled in close collaboration with Erik Kwakkel, and which at this writing consists of some 15 manuscripts containing passages that include the abbreviations. We hope to find the time and opportunity to elaborate further on this research.

bride and the bridegroom on the seventh branch of the palm tree as follows: *In deme garten wil Got růwen súzicliche unde vriuntliche mit der liebun sele. Ze der sprichit unsir herre: 'Sele, mich het sere gelustet daz ich din antliute ane sæhe!'* [In that garden God wishes to rest sweetly and pleasantly with the beloved soul. To her Our Lord says: 'Soul, I desire greatly to see your face!'][102] In Ls. 31 an expansion has been added, pertaining to the physical phenomena that may accompany the meeting between Christ and the soul:

> In desen boegarde wilt Got rasten sutelike ende vrolike met derre heileger selen. Dat weten wale de sulke die desen verwenden boegart dragen, want si gevulen biwilen dasse verswigen en connen, sin mutent openbaren in worden ogt in gelate ogt in der stemmen, vander groter weldecheit die bennen hen es. Ende alse dan horen die gene metten nidegen ende met den verrotden herten, so verkeren sit hen, ombe dassis nin gevulen. Mar sin dragen desen boegart nit, dis en smakense oec der vrogt nit. Te derre selen sprict onse here: 'Mi heft verlanct dat ic din anschin moge an sien.'[103]
>
> [In this orchard God wishes to rest sweetly and pleasantly with the sacred soul. Those who carry this blessed orchard (with them), for they frequently feel that they may not remain silent, and they must reveal either in words or countenance or in their voice the great power that dwells within them. And if those who have envious and rotten hearts hear them, they are annoyed, because they do not feel it. But they do not carry this orchard with them, and thus they do not taste its fruit. To such souls our Lord says, 'I have the desire to look upon you face.']

The Middle Dutch text embroiders further on the image of the orchard of *minne* from the Song of Songs, and distinguishes a category of people who carry in their hearts the *verwende boegart* [the blessed orchard]. They have truly opened their hearts to Christ and know first-hand the ecstasy that the encounter with Him entails. By alluding to this, the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* forges a bond with his audience, that also longs for such a religious experience. The Middle Dutch sermons were written for a religious circle which aspired to a direct encounter with God. At the same time a category of antagonists is denoted who have assumed a skeptical stance. Apparently the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* and his circle had to deal with critics who had their doubts about their ecstatic spirituality.

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[102] Rieder 1908, 272,32–34; cf. Fleischer 1976, 288,443–446 (which also provides the Latin phrase *Ostende michi faciem tuam*).

[103] Kern 1895, 458:21–459:8.

> The expression *enen verwenden boegart dragen* which appears twice in the passage quoted above, also appears a number of times in Ls. 39, for example in the passage: *van uwen herten, dar dese verwent boegart in geplant sal wesen*.[104] The term *verweent* is a characteristic concept from early vernacular mysticism in the German-speaking areas. According to Hans Neumann Mechtild von Magdeburg was the first to use the term in this way, but it also occurs in the writings of Hadewijch and Beatrice of Nazareth (= Ls. 42).[105] It appears with some regularity in the *Boec der minnen*, as well, for example in the following phrase: *in dye verweinde ewlicheyt, in de ewlike verweintheyt*.[106] Reynaert considers the frequent occurrence of the term *verweent* in Hadewijch's Letter 28 as an argument against attributing this letter to her; the term occurs much less frequently in the other Letters.[107] According to the *Vroegmiddelnederlands Woordenboek*—which includes hardly any mystical sources—*verweent* means either 'lascivious, flirtatious' or 'glorious, beautiful'.[108] The *Middelnederlandsch woordenboek* includes under the lemma *verweent* various passages from Ls. 39, with different meanings: 'glorious, blessed, divinely beautiful, 'glorious, ecstatic' and 'sumptuous, precious, exquisite'.[109] A fixed combination with the verb *dragen* is not recorded. Nevertheless, the phrase ['to carry the blessed orchard'] seems to be an established expression within the context of the *Limburg sermons*, which indicates that one is susceptible to mystical inspiration.

In the milieu in which the Ripuarian *Buch der Minne* functioned, such ecstatic outbursts also occurred, as witnessed by this plastic description of the thirteenth level of contemplation:

> Up dezen grat zijn de ghene comen dye wi undertiden zien of in den ghebede of in gheystliker ghedachten of van der cracht der worden Goids vorder comen ende van hem zelven ghevremt worden alzoe dat zi nyet en weten wat zi důn. Zi en weten nyet wat zi spreken ende nochtan yet spreken. Zi ghewinnen eene stemme dar ne gheene besceyden wort an luden. Want zi en roeren de tonghe niet na de ghewointe der naturen, mar van den stormen des geysts, dye ze zoe vervolt dat ze de volheyt můten ut laten. Ende de lide dye de nature te sprekene heift geteirmet, ze en moghen nyet dye inresten zuticheyt ut te draghene. Recht als du marken moighst an eenen oven dye vele viers hadde ende een cleyne hol: be wilen sloghe de vlamme dar ut ghelike bewilen de roec. Ende dat zelve vier dat dar ut sloghe en hadde zijns scijns niet vollike, ende dar omme als ze noch zwighen noch vollen spreken en moghen, zoe můten

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[104] Kern 1895, 546,20–21; other passages in Ls. 39 are Kern 1895, 539:15, 540:5, 541:12, 543:7 and 546:20.
[105] Neumann 1965, 238.
[106] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 40:17–18.
[107] Reynaert 1975, 226.
[108] *VMNW* IV, 5185–5186.
[109] *MNW* IX, 305–308.

> ze crijschen, dat is jubileren, des dumme lude dicke ghemůyet worden dye de cracht des gheysts nyet en kennen.[110]
>
> [At this level have arrived those who we sometimes see either in prayer or in spiritual thought or who through the power of Gods words have advanced and become so alienated from themselves that they know not what they do. They do not know what they say and yet they speak. They acquire a voice that is incapable of uttering a humble word. For they do not move their tongues according to nature, but by the storm of the spirit, which they feel with such intensity that they are compelled to let it all out. And those to whom nature has granted the ability to speak are unable to express that internal joy. Just as you may observe with an oven with many flames but just one small hole: sometimes the flames shoot out along with the smoke. And that same fire that shot out did not did not represent itself fully, and therefore they can neither remain silent nor express all that they would, they must cry out, that is jubilation, of a kind that annoys ignorant folk who do not know the power of the spirit.]

We have in the meantime come to know the author of this text as an innovator of metaphorical language. The metaphor used here of wild flames that shoot out of an oven too small to contain them—an image drawn once again from real life—provides an apt representation of how someone who is spiritually inebriated can lose complete control over him or herself.

As the author of the *Buch der Minne* so concisely put it, the phenomenon that he and the translator of the *Limburg sermons* in Ls. 31 describe, *dat is jubileren*. The term *jubilus* (or *jubilatio*) denotes a state that can accompany the mystical meeting with God and in which the mystic loses his self-control and spontaneously bursts out in song or yelling.[111] In the spirituality of the female religious movement of Liège and Brabant, this celebration was a fairly common practice, which was usually observed with awe. This is apparent from the *Vita Maria Oigniacensis*, in which an elaborate description is given of how Mary of Oignies (†1213) on her deathbed tirelessly sang songs and said prayers for days on end.[112] Her sympathizers—to whom Jacques de Vitry, the author of this *vita*, most certainly belonged—saw in this unusual behavior a glimpse of divine bliss. Hadewijch, too, refers to *jubilatio*, in particular in Letters 5 and 6,

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[110] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 54:15–31.

[111] Studies of the phenomenon of *jubilatio* are Grundmann 1978c and Solignac 1974.

[112] *AASS* Jun. IV (23 juni), 663; cited in § 1.5 n. 312. Cf. e.g. Goossens 1994–95, 23–24.

but her attitude is rather sober-minded: for her these were all just external phenomena, whereas the mystical life was supposed to be all about the internal meeting with God.[113] Nevertheless, the recognition of the authenticity of these mystical side effects would appear to have been fairly widespread. In *Des XII preus que li sacremens fait* [The twelve fruits produced by the sacrament] for example, a text that also circulated among lay circles (see § 4.5), Guiard of Laon links the ninth fruit of the Eucharist with *une joie de cuer con apele jubilation* [a joy of the heart that is called jubilation].[114] Ls. 40 is at this point somewhat less explicit: the ninth fruit of the sacrament is that it *die sile berurt na den wille ons hereni* [moves the soul according to the will of our Lord].[115] But there should be no doubt that for the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* these external phenomena were unmistakable signs of a divine blessing.

The author of the *Buch der Minne* appears to have had a somewhat more reserved attitude, as witnessed by the following passage:

> De dertiende grat is des wijns dranc, des claers wijns dranc dar ic nyet of en weet of hi zůtere of starker zi dan hi zůte is. Ic ghelie mijnre doerheden dat ic van dezen dranc nyet spreken kan, want ic er nye of dronken en wart, ya leyder nie dar of en dranc. Ic wane nochtan dat de ghene dye dar of dronken zijn worden, nyet van dezer dronkenscepe zekerlike ghezegghen moghen, ende dye rechte zegghen moghe hů hem zi ghesciet, dye en waren nyet dronken.[116]
>
> [The thirteenth level is the drink of wine, the purest drink of wine of which I do not know if it is sweeter or stronger than it is sweet. I admit my ignorance, that I may not speak with authority about this drink, for I have never been drunk on it, and alas have not even tasted it. I believe however that those who have become drunk on it are surely not allowed to talk about this drunkenness, and those who may clearly say what happened to them, were not drunk.]

This author could do no more than describe the state of spiritual drunkenness from a certain remove, in as much as he could not speak from his own experience, as he himself admits. If we compare this to the more involved tone of the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*, then we are perhaps justified in suspecting that the latter had firsthand experience of the gift of mystical inspiration.

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[113] Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 44:17–19 (Letter 5) and 58:118–120 (Letter 6). Cf. Mommaers 1984, 143–145.
[114] Boeren 1956, 317.
[115] Kern 1895, 553,24–25.
[116] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 53:27–54,2.

The author of the *Buch der Minne* also had his own critics to deal with, whom he accused of being foolish rather than evil. They are *dumme lude* [. . .] *dye de cracht des gheysts nyet en kennen* [stupid people who do not know the power of the spirit] and therefore dare to doubt the truth of what they see.[117] From the rest of his narrative, however, it appears that such criticism could also be well founded. There also appear to be people who think too lightly about the gift of inspiration.

> Dat sprek ic dor de ghene dye hem zelven brude willen maken ende noch nyet en quamen up den eersten graet. Dy ghisteren ghenghen dansen ende springhen, huden willen ze in der kerke jubileren. Ghisteren waren ze vleeselic, heden gheystelic. Wanen coimt deze gheelike heylicheyt? Neen, zůte lyeve, neen! Mene mach up dezen grat nyet springhen. Men můt in dezen heymeliken verborghen kelre wel stadelike van grade te grade gheleyt worden.[118]
>
> [I speak concerning those who would make themselves brides without even having arrived at the first level. Those who yesterday went dancing and cavorting, today want to celebrate in church. Yesterday they were worldly, today they are spiritual. Where does this complete saintliness come from? No, dearly beloved, no! One may not leap forward to this level. One must be led gradually to this secretly hidden cellar level by level].

Thus there were people who wanted for the most part to skip the long contemplative process divided into fifteen stages in the *Buch der Minne* and experience the meeting with God immediately. This is a familiar danger in the mystical life, of which potential critics may be warned.

The interest in mystical experiences and their side effects is greater in the *Limburg sermons* than in the *St. Georgen sermons*. Although the German sermon collection is not classified as mystic literature in the field of Germanic studies, its authors certainly do not avoid the theme. Frühwald has even devoted a long discussion to the mystical influences in the *St. Georgen sermons*.[119] Rd. 60 (Ls. 31) is the only text in which the mystical union of the bride and bridegroom is plainly described (even though this happens primarily in the words of the *Sankt Trudperter Hohelied*), but there are various others that touch on mystical themes. According to Frühwald *minne* is one of the cardinal themes in mystical

[117] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 54:30–31; the complete passage was cited earlier in this section.

[118] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 55:10–17.

[119] On the mysticism in the *SGP* see Frühwald 1963, 117–139.

spirituality of the thirteenth century, and also one of the pillars that supports the *St. Georgen sermons*.[120]

There are two Middle High German sermons that delve thoroughly into subjects from mystical theology. Ls. 5 (Rd. 41) takes as its theme the text concerning the *raptus sancti Pauli*, the conversion vision in which Paul reports that he was taken to the third heaven, where he mysteriously heard the voice of God (2 Cor. 12:2). With reference to this theme, the sermon distinguished three heavens into which 'we' may be caught up: 1) our soul, 2) the visible heavens, and 3) a heaven *die heit intellectualis, dat is een verstendenisse* [that is called *intellectualis*, that is, 'understanding'].[121] The term here employed by Ls. 5 could point to an interest in a more intellectual mysticism, directed at contemplation of God's marvelous being. But in this sermon *minne* is ultimately not much less a central concept than in the other *St. Georgen sermons*. This is demonstrated, for example, by the description of the second heaven, in which the believer is called to love God through his creation. With a reference to Bernard of Clairvaux it is explained that the perfected soul carries with it three ways of loving: *amor, dilectio* and *caritas*, whereby *caritas* is the most far-reaching and comprehensive.[122] That the Middle Dutch translation follows this line of thought through to the end is demonstrated by the added concluding prayer, in which God is asked to grant this *heilege minne* [sacred love] to the audience.[123]

The most mystical *St. Georgen sermon* is Ls. 15 (Rd. 56), in which such classical themes as contemplation with the inner eye, the ladders of the soul and the *visio beatifica* are developed.[124] In this sermon there is a reference to a theological debate from the thirteenth century: *Dar op disputiren sulken mestere ende dugte hem onmugelike dat wi Gode sulden sien onbedect* [Some masters have debated this subject and determined that it will be impossible for us to see God directly].[125] With the help of Bede it is subsequently demonstrated that these scholars were wrong. This passage refers to position defended by theologians at the universities of Paris and Oxford that God and man can never behold or meet

[120] Frühwald 1963, 138–139 identifies Rd. 40, 45, 46, 50, 57, 59, 60 and 71 as *SGP* that thematize *minne*.
[121] Kern 1895, 231:7–8.
[122] Frühwald 1963, 136–138. Frühwald also shows how thoroughly Rd. 41 builds on Bernard of Clairvaux, especially on his treatise *De consideratione*.
[123] Kern 1895, 232:34–36.
[124] See Frühwald 1963, 117–129 for further background.
[125] Kern 1895, 350,4–6.

each other directly. This position went against the orthodox view, for ever since the Church Fathers it had been taught that the gap between God and mankind has been closed by the incarnation of Christ. The dispute about the possibility of the *visio beatifica* [beatific vision] was settled officially in 1241, when at the University of Paris the position that the divine essence could not be viewed by either mankind or the angels was condemned.[126] This condemnation of the scholar's view could not prevent, however, a wedge from being driven gradually between philosophy and theology. A form of scholasticism based on reason was systematical developed at the universities, while theology, especially under the influence of the mendicant orders, turned in the direction of spirituality and mysticism.[127] It should be evident that the *St. Georgen sermons* and the *Limburg sermons* may be placed in the latter category.[128]

Although Ls. 15 emphatically keeps open the possibility of visions and other kinds of blessing, this sermon remains predominantly contemplative and offers no concrete descriptions of mystical experiences. And yet it appears that in the milieu for which the *St. Georgen sermons* were written there were indeed from time to time overstrained expectations concerning the encounter with God. Ls. 14 (Rd. 55) in particular, in which seven virtues of Mary are discussed, condemns those religious who believe they are qualified to behold the angels, or even Mary or the Lord Himself. Such people are, however, *dumplike bedagt* [foolish of mind], as the Middle Dutch translator put it.[129] The fifth virtue is held up to them as an example, and it consists in her not finding herself worthy to speak with the angel Gabriel. Both sermon corpuses thus incorporate emphatic warnings against overweening pride in this area.

In the translated *St. Georgen sermons* we nevertheless encounter regular signs of adaptation that indicate that in the milieu of the *Limburg*

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[126] For the thirteenth-century debate on the *visio beatifica* see especially Dondaine 1952; see further Frühwald 1963, 127–129 and Faesen 2000, 103–112.

[127] Cf. Reynaert 1995, 112–114.

[128] The *Buch der Minne* also contains an exposition on the contemplation of God prompted by the conversion of Paul. The author distinguishes three kinds. The first occurs during this life and is very brief; one sees God as in a mirror. This is what happened to Paul when he was caught up into the third heaven. The second occurs when the soul is separated from the body; the vision is then direct. The third kind occurs at the end of days; this vision is pure, sweet and everlasting (Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 156:26–17:21). For the author of the *Buch der Minne*, then, the possibility of the beatific vision on earth is every bit as much a non-issue.

[129] Kern 1895, 333:17.

sermons there was a keen interest in everything that had to do with *minne* mysticism. From the very outset, in Ls. 1, a striking change has been incorporated. Rd. 37 reads:

> Dar zů twang in dú minne daz er mentschlich natur an sich nam und sich dú gothait måhelt zů únserr kranken mentschhait, dar zů twang in dú minne. Da von spricht sant Bernhart: 'Es ist nit daz so gewaltig mug gesin so dú minne, won si twang Got daz er mentsch wart'. Sant Dyonisius sprichet: 'Es enist nit daz so wirdig si so dú minne, won si mahte Got ze mentschen und den mentschen ze Gotte', als spricht únser herre: 'Ich sprich daz ir Gôt sint'. Daz ist also ze verstånde daz wir alles daz hant daz wir wend. Wir sint also volkomen an vrôden, an schônhait, an wishait und an allen dingen, und wôlte úns únser herre me geben, wir enwôltenz nit. Und da von daz wir ållú ding nach wunsche habent und nach willen in únser masse, da von so sint wir Gôtte. Und daz er sprichit daz nút so wirdig si so dú minne, daz ist da von daz si Got ze mentschen machte und den mentschen ze Got. Dú minne ist so edel und so wirdig daz si den mentschen an allen dingen Got gelichet in der masse als wir im glich mugent sin.[130]
>
> [Love compelled him to assume human form and his godly nature to be married to our feeble human nature, it was Love that compelled him to do so. Concerning this St. Bernard says" 'There is nothing that could be as powerful as Love, for it compelled God to become man.' St. Dyonisius says: 'There is nothing as worthy as Love, for she made God into a man and a man into God,' and so says our Lord: 'I say that you are gods.' That is to say that we have everything that we want. We are complete in joy, and beauty and wisdom and in all things, and if the Lord were to want to give us more, we would not desire it. And because we have everything that we could want and could wish for in our degree, we are therefore gods. And the reason why he says that nothing is as worthy as Love, is because she makes God man and man God. Love is so noble and so worthy that she makes man equal to god in all things, in as much as we are capable of being equal to him. He says that nothing is more worthy than Love, that it is the reason why she makes God man, and man God. Love is so noble and so worthy that it renders man like unto God to the degree that as we are capable of being.]

The *St. Georgen sermon* takes care to argue that it is His love (*minne*) for man that compelled Christ to become a man. To lend further support to the thesis, evidence is adduced from two of the founders of the

[130] Rieder 1908, 97,2–16.

Western mystical tradition, Bernard of Clairvaux and Dionysius the Areopagite.[131]

The Middle Dutch translation provides little more than an abbreviated summary of this narrative. The quotations from both authorities are scrapped. Their arguments, however, are briefly described, whereby the statement by Dionysius receives the most emphasis: not only does God become man, but man becomes like God, at least in so far as that is possible.

> Ende daer tue dwangen die minne dassich Got mensche macde, ende die menschen te Gode, als dar vore steet, dar onse here sprict dat wi gode werden. Dat macde allene die minne, want minne es so edel ende so werdech dasse den mensche ane allen dengen Gode gelic mact, in der maten dat hi heme gelic mag werden.[132]
>
> [And love compelled God to become man, and man God, just as it has been stated before, that our Lord said that we were become God. Only Love did this, for Love is so noble and so worthy that it renders man equal to God in all things, to the extent that he may equal Him.].

Why the Middle Dutch translator, who usually sticks close to his source text, deleted the evidence from both authorities is difficult to say. Given his keen interest in mystical themes, this intervention is surprising. Perhaps he did not think it expediant to mention the always somewhat suspect name of the architect of negative theology and therefore also deleted Bernard of Clairvaux's name? Another possibility is that this adaptation is somehow connected with the prominent place of Rd. 37 in the *Limburg sermons*, whereby the series opens with a reference to bridal mysticism. For whether that was the immediate intention or not, the abbreviation in Ls. 1 lends the *minne* aspect in that sermon a much higher degree of emphasis than in the *St. Georgen sermon*.

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[131] The fact that God is compelled by love to become man is a commonplace, which occurs in the Latin tradition among other places in Hugh of St. Victor. In the MHG literature, too, it shows up frequently. Cf. Volfing 1997, 128–130 (where in n. 19 Rd. 14 is also mentioned).

[132] Kern 1895, 182:11–17. This last phrase is very reminiscent of Hadewijch: *de minne es soe edel ende so rive, aen hare and blivet niemans loen* (Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 88:41–42) [Love is so noble and liberal, she witholds no man's reward; Hart 1980, 66], but here the MHG source text is faithfully translated.

> Thanks to the quotation in Rd. 37, the *St. Georgen sermons* are the oldest witness to the reception of Dionysius in Middle High German.[133] In Ls. 1, the Middle Dutch translation, Dionysius's name may have been omitted, but the contents of the quotation have been more or less preserved. For the Middle Dutch tradition, then, the *Limburg sermons* constitute the oldest proof of a reception of Dionysius' works, on the understanding that this corpus of sermons failed to mention his name.[134] The oldest named Middle Dutch Dionysius citation is found in the manuscript containing the *Rothschild Canticles*, where ca. 1300 a couple of lines by Dionysius were added. There is a Middle High German source behind this quotation, too, which can probably be associated with the Dominicans, the first to disseminate his thoughts on a larger scale in the vernacular.[135]

We find more indications of a deep interest in the life of *minne* elsewhere in the translated *St. Georgen sermons* as well. Thus it was that in Ls. 21 the following phrase was added to the source text Rd. 64: *Dats waer, die dus minnen leven, si gevulents bewilen*. [It is true, those who live thus to Love, they sometimes feel it].[136] He who lives to Love, will sometimes experience it, or so this phrase seems to suggest. And in the mosaic sermon Ls. 26 a passage has been included that does not appear in either of the Middle High German sources, and may thus be attributed to the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*. He compares the Loving person to a flying bird:

> Nu eest metten mensche die minnen wilt alse metten vogele die vligen wilt. Der vogel die vligen wilt, sin heme sin vlogele verbonden, son can hi gevligen nit. Also est met vel liden die bewilen hebben enen guden wille Gode te minne, mar hen es therte ende hare begeringen also verbonden met ertschen kommere dasse des guden willen onlange mester sin.[137]
>
> [Now it is so that he who would Love is like the bird who would fly. The bird who wishes to fly, if his wings are bound, he cannot fly. So is it with many who sometimes have a good will to love God, but their hearts and desires are bound by worldly concerns so that their good intentions are overcome.]

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[133] Cf. Riedlinger & Honemann 1980, 158–159. Honemann identifies Rd. 33 as the most important witness of the early Dionysius reception in German; that text does not belong to the *SGP*, however, but rather to the *Schweizer Predigten*.

[134] In Ls. 37 Dionysius is characterized as a pagan teacher, who is to be equated with the patron saint of Paris, but here every trace of the founder of negative theology has disappeared (see § 2.4).

[135] See Scheepsma 2001a, 281–286.

[136] Kern 1895, 403:2–3.

[137] Kern 1895, 420:21–27.

Good intentions are not enough to allow one to participate in *minne*. It is imperative that one distance oneself from worldly desires in order to be able to fly free.

> The use of bird metaphors in the *Limburg sermons* is striking. In Ls. 14 the image is used of someone who wants to fly without feathers, whereby the feathers stand for the monastic virtues.[138] In Ls. 28 (Rd. 63) three kinds of 'ascension' are described, whereby the third is described as *opfligen* (flying up). One needs two wings for this, namely divine *minne* and the longing for divine sweetness.[139] The palm tree in Ls. 31 is populated by no fewer than seven allegorical birds, among whom are a few mythological ones (see § 2.3). The most splendid bird imagery in the *Limburg sermons* is from *Det sin seven manieren van minnen* (Ls. 42), where in the sixth way the Loving soul is compared to a bird that flies through the air and a fish that swims through the vastness of the sea.[140] Perhaps this predilection for bird imagery is connected to the leaning toward organic imagery that Schweitzer perceives in certain heretical or semi-heretical circles (see § 2.3 en 3.3).

Themes of *minne* are most strongly in evidence, however, in the sixteen interpolated *Limburg sermons*. Two of these may without hesitation be classified as *minne* treatises, namely Ls. 41 and Ls. 42. In the latter, *Det sin seven manieren van minnen*, we read with regard to the fourth way once again a description of the physical sensations that can accompany the encounter with the divine:

> Alse aldus gevult hars selfs in die overvludecheit van walheide ende die grote volheit van herten, so wert har gest altemale verse<n>kede in minnen, har lighame ontsinkende, har herte versmeltende, al har magt verdervende, ende so sere wertse verwonnen met minnen dasse kume har selver can gedragen ende decwile ongeweldech wert hare lede ende al harre sinne. Ende geliker wis als een vat dat vol es ende hastelike overvloit ende ut brect als mit rurt, also wertse haestelike sere gerenen ende al verwonnen van der groter volheit hars herten, soe dat biwilen hars ondancs ut brect ende over vloit.[141]
>
> [When the soul feels itself to be thus filled full of riches and in such fullness of heart, the spirit sinks away down into love, the body seems to pass away, the heart to melt, every faculty to fail; and the soul is so utterly conquered by love that often it cannot support itself, often the limbs and the senses lose their powers. And just as a vessel filled up to

[138] Kern 1895, 272:14–23; cited in § 1.4.
[139] Kern 1895, 427:16–24.
[140] Kern 1895, 577:29–34.
[141] Kern 1895, 574:23–575:4.

> the brim will run over and spill if it is touched, so at times the soul is so touched and overpowered by this great fullness of the heart that in spite of itself it spills and overflows.][142]

Described here in different terms altogether, then, is how the inspired mystic overflows from within, as it were, and loses control of all of his physical powers. Given the frequency with which such descriptions crop up, we are justified in assuming that mystical experiences were no exception in the milieu that gave rise to the *Limburg sermons*.

This notion is confirmed by a passage in another of the interpolated sermons, *Dets van der heilger selen*, where it is even related in which situations ecstatic experiences are usually manifested. Ls. 45 there touches on the second way in which the Lord reveals Himself to man, namely through Scripture:

> Also est metten genen die leven in dogden ende in heilger begerden, alse hoeren de heilge screfturen lesen ochte sengen, si werden biwilen soe ontfenct dassit verhelen en connen ende mut ut breken, als mi biwilen hoert ende siet vanden sulken dasse criten ocht rupen ochte wonderlic gelaet hebben vander hitten die in hen compt.[143]
>
> [Thus it is with those who live in virtue and holy desire, that if they hear holy scripture read out loud or sung, they are sometimes so enflamed that they cannot hide it and must burst out, as one sometimes hears and sees with those who cry out or yell or assume such a marvelous countenance when the heat comes upon them.]

Thus it was especially readings from the Bible, more particularly liturgical services, that could lead to emotional outbursts of a religious nature.[144] The author of the *Buch der Minne* refers to approximately the same situations in the daily life within a religious community: readings from scripture, liturgy and private meditation.[145] Mystical experiences must have been rather commonplace in such milieus, or rather: they determined the horizon of expectations of both the individual and the community as a whole.

The most intriguing pronouncements on these phenomena made by the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* are found in the long Middle Dutch

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[142] Transl. Colledge in Petroff 1986, 202.
[143] Kern 1895, 618,14–20.
[144] Cf. Largier 2000, 99–106, on the central important of the liturgy in 'allegorical theology'. The Visions of Hadewijch begin remarkably often with a reference to the liturgical cycle; cf. the overview in Tersteeg 1997, 100–103.
[145] Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 54,15–17; cited above.

interpolation at the end of Ls. 31. There he engages rather aggressively in a debate with otherwise unidentified critics, which tempts him to take up some rather pronounced positions.

> Dmeeste wonder dat mi begripen mag, dat mag der gude mensche begripen in den geeste die getruwelike Gode volgt. Ende of Got enen guden mensche so vele guts duet van bennen dat hijt onthouden en can, hen muet biwilen ut breken ende over vloyen in worden ogt in gelate ogte oec in critene van din wondere dat Got bewillen schiet in der selen van bovene, muet dar ombe emmer quaet sin? Nů si di doch ende hoert dat een mensche enen anderen erveert met uttersten saken, so dat hi crit ende erschiet! Ende of Got in der selen mere wonder werct dan enech mensche van butene werken mag in den anderen, est wonder ogse crit ende erveert wert? Bi lode, neent! Mar degene diet verkeren, si hebben onregt, want Got vermach alle denc ende es geweldech te gevene den enen meer ende den anderen men nadien dat hi gebiet ende wilt.[146]
>
> [The greatest wonder that one can comprehend, is that which good people grasp in the spirit who faithfully follow the God. And if God fills good people with so much good from within that they cannot contain it, that they must sometimes burst out and overflow in words or in countenance or in exclamations due to the wonder that God sometimes infuses the soul with from above, is that such an evil thing? Now you see and hear how one person may frighten another with danger, so that he cries out and turns pale! And if God works more marvels in the soul than any person may work externally, is it a wonder that he cries out and turns pale? By Lo, no! But those who pervert it are wrong, for God may do all things and has the power to give to one more than He does to another according to His command and wish.]

The compiler of the *Limburg sermons* and his circle apparently feared the criticism of certain figures who—so they thought—considered celebration and other ecstatic experiences to be the suggestions of the devil rather than real signs of inspiration.

Having defended the authenticity of these ecstatic phenomena, the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* next moves on to a diagnosis of his (potential) critics:

> Nu sin sulke lide die hebben ene gebreke die hen utermaten sere let ende hindert, want ombe dassi onvolmact sin ende hars ei[n]gens willen vol<gen>[147] ende luttel gevulen van Gode, dis en connense geloeven dat iman anders van Gode iet hebbe. Ende als si in den guden de wonder

[146] Kern 1895, 465,22–466,5.

[147] H reads *vol* here. Kern 1895, 465:11 does not acknowledge scribal error here; B1, Br1 and W, however, all read *volg(h)en*.

> Gots sien ogte horen, in worden ogt in werken ogt in gelate, so verkeren sit dis sis nit en verstaen. Oec en verstaet een leec dewangelie nit, esse dar ombe vals? Enttrowen, nees! 'Ja', spreken sulke lide, 'wat est dar dese mede ombe gaen, met haren critene ende met haren sconen worden? Bi lode, in weet wat es. Het dunct mi quaet!'[148]
>
> [Now there are such folk who have a shortcoming that limits and hinders them, for because they are imperfect and follow their own will and feel little from God, because of this they cannot believe that anyone else could receive anything from God. And if they see or hear in the good the wonder of God, in words or in works or in countenance, they pervert that which they do not understand. Though a lay person may not understand the gospel, is it therefore false? No, certainly not! 'Aye', such folk say, 'what is it that they are about, with their cries and fancy words. By Lo, I don't know what it is. It seems to me evil!']

The dreaded opponents prove to be imperfect, whereby divine inspiration is denied them as a matter of course, without their even being aware why. Earlier in Ls. 31 such opponents were referred to as *die gene met de nidegen ende met den verrotden herten* [those with the envious and rotten hearts] (see above)—whereby responsibility for the modifier involving the rotten hearts would appear to lie exclusively with the scribe of manuscript H.[149] In brief, we are dealing here with people who by virtue of their own shortcomings are excluded from direct inspiration.

It is hardly clear from the context who precisely the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* was targeting with his outbursts in Ls. 31. We hasten to point out that sharp criticism directed at potential critics occurs quite frequently in literary texts. Frequently its only purpose is to bolster the argument of the author, and there are no real opponents involved at all. This could be the case here, though the fierce tone and repeated accusations levied by the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* would seem to argue against that supposition. But even then it would be interesting to know from which direction he expected antagonism. One thinks first of outside critics, for instance among the clerics, who viewed the mystical spirituality practiced in this circle with suspicion. The decree of Paris in 1241 certainly did not do away completely with all doubts about the *visio beatifica*, and that holds true for the Netherlands, as well. Rob Faesen demonstrates, for example, how in the prologue to his work the author of the *Vita Beatricis*, who wrote this text ca. 1270, covered

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[148] Kern 1895, 465:9–19.

[149] Kern 1895, 459:5–6. The same expression occurs as well in Ls. 48 (Kern 1895, 644:23–26); see § 2.13.

himself against critical minds who might doubt the authenticity of Beatrice's visionary experiences.[150] Beatrice of Nazareth claims in at least one vision that the distance between her and God had disappeared altogether, whereby she was able to comprehend the divine essence. The anonymous hagiographer tried to take the wind out of his critics' sails in advance by invoking Haymo of Auxerre, a much beloved author in mystical circles. For Haymo recognized the existence of the third heaven of Paul, where the apostle was supposed to have seen God face-to-face. On balance it is certainly possible that the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* and his circle, who were active at the same time and in the same region, also had to contend with clerical criticism.

Franz-Josef Schweitzer seeks the explanation for the defensive tone in the Middle Dutch interpolations in Ls. 31 in a different direction. He points to sometimes striking similarities with statements from a curious dialogue entitled *Meester Eckhart en de leek* [Meister Eckhart and the layman].[151] This Middle Dutch is supposed to be dated to the first half of the fourteenth century, though there is some debate over the exact date and place of composition.[152] The chronological remove from *Limburg sermons* need not at any rate be too great. Via a fictitious dialogue between Meister Eckhart (condemned for heresy) and an unspecified layman, the anonymous author of *Meester Eckhart en de leek* levies stern criticism against the state of church affairs in his day. C.G.N. de Vooys was the first to draw attention to this explosive text, which would in no way have been pleasing to the Church. He describes *Meester Eckhart en de leek* as 'anti-hierarchical', but 'anti-clerical' is a better designation, for the layman is mainly concerned with the fact that the sacraments can only be acquired via clerics, with their frequently dubious lifestyles. The personal religious experiences and insights of lay folk are ignored by the Church. *Meester Eckhart en de leek* belongs to a group of texts that

[150] Faesen 1999.

[151] Ed. Schweitzer 1997; comprehensive fragments are presented as well by De Vooys 1910.

[152] Schweitzer 1997, LII–LIV dates *Meester Eckhart and the leek* to the period 1340–1341, De Vooys 1903 and De Vooys 1910 maintain a date of 1325/1326, while Axters 1950–1960, vol. 2, 450–452 and Lerner 1972, 213–215 prefer to date it ca. 1336. Warnar 1995 restricts himself to the remark that the author of the text refers to an event in 1325/1326, but leaves the date open. On the localization there are just as many differences of opinion: some take it to be Holland (De Vooys, Schweitzer, Lerner), others Brabant (De Bruin 1956), while Warnar identifies a possible connection with Cologne and the trial of Eckhart for heresy. A summary of the discussion is offered by Schweitzer 1997, XVII–XXV.

give expression to a heresy that was tenaciously persecuted especially in the fourteenth century, namely that of the Free Spirit.[153] A few well-known texts from this group include Margaretha Porete's *Mirouer des ames simples anienties*, the Middle High German dialogue *Schwester Katrei* and a number of so-called pseudo-Eckhart treatises.[154]

In his recent edition of *Meester Eckhart en de leek* Schweitzer notes parallels between three of the layman's vexing questions and a number of Middle Dutch interpolations in Ls. 31.[155] The similarities between what the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* inserted are sometimes striking, especially where it concerns the criticism of the clergy. Under question 73 of *Meester Eckhart en de leek*, for example, we read:

> Sy connen die scrifuere ende si draghen abijt ende sy gheuoelen cleyn god in haerre sielen. Al daer om soe en willen sy niet gheloeuen, dat leeken moeghen werden ghetroest, om dat sy vander letter niet gheleert en syn.[156]
>
> [They know scripture and they wear the habit and they feel little good in their souls. They therefore do not believe that lay folk can receive grace, because they are not trained in letters.]

This severe criticism of the representatives of the Church is reminiscent of what the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* says about those who are skeptical of religious ecstasy. The ideas of 'the layman' were also regularly recorded by adherents of the Free Spirit or by persons or groups who were accused of belonging to these supposedly heretical movements.[157]

It cannot be denied that some statements of the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* exhibit affinities with what appears in *Meester Eckhart en de leek* and other texts which give expression to the Free Spirit. If we were to situate the *Limburg sermons* in a similar milieu as the one that produced *Meester Eckhart en de leek*, then the outburst in Ls. 31 could be directed against Church inquisitors. The rebellious layman suggests, after all, that he had been interrogated by the Inquisition (and that

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[153] The standard work on the Free Spirit is Lerner 1972.

[154] Cf. the summaries in Lerner 1972, 200–227 and Schweitzer 2000, 326–327.

[155] Schweitzer 1997, 192–193 (with reference to question 25), 208–209 (question 73) and 212–213 (question 102). In a few instances Schweitzer also includes the text of the original SG redaction in his discussions.

[156] Ed. Schweitzer 1997, 62,4–6.

[157] Cf. Lerner 1972, 200–227, where various texts are discussed which give expression to ideas associated with the Free Spirit.

Meister Eckhart appeared as the inquisitor). Schweitzer appears to be thinking along these lines, but the differences between the layman and the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* seem in the end too great to me.[158] The intensely monastically oriented contents in and of themselves give one little reason to look for the thirteenth-century audience of the *Limburg sermons* in a semi-heretical, possibly Free Spirit affiliated milieu—though this possibility should not be dismissed out of hand. The translator of Ls. 31 does indeed go off the deep end a couple of times against people who do not take mystical experiences seriously, but his criticism is by no means as fundamental or anti-clerical as what is brought to bear in *Meester Eckhart en de leek*. The cardinal difference is that the dialogue is emphatically placed in the mouth of a layman who professes to know God's intentions better than an unworthy priest. In the *Limburg sermons* it is mainly priests who are speaking in the form of sermons. We are thus hardly likely to be dealing here with truly fundamental resistance against representatives of the Church. But that does not discount the fact that the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* could have been critical of the Church, against which he felt compelled, at least within his own circle, to defend himself.

Upon further consideration, however, we may not entirely discount the possibility that this Middle Dutch Palm Tree treatise was intended primarily for the preacher's immediate circle. In several interpolations in Ls. 31, but also in other adaptations by the translator of the *St. Georgen sermons*, there appear stern warnings against the activities of false religious in their own circle, who hypocritically hide behind their own fair words, but who all the while undermine the morale of the entire community (see § 2.3). Seen in this light, the fierce outbursts against the *nidegen* [envious] could just as easily have been aimed at members of his own group who nurtured doubts about experiencing or aspiring to mystical experiences. Perhaps these critics were spiritually barren and therefore jealous, or they had other reasons to doubt the authenticity of what they observed in their fellow brothers and sisters. To the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*, to whom we must credit a leadership role, the activities of such a fifth column naturally constituted an internal threat to the atmosphere of his community. The emotional line of reasoning that he opts for, in which direct speech and colloquial language are

[158] Schweitzer 1997, LXI n. 193 identifies the *LS* as a source for *Meester Eckhart en de leek*; see further the relevant passages in n. 144.

the norm, would be easy to understand from such a background. For an apology aimed at church dignitaries or scholars a somewhat more moderate tone would have been more appropriate—though 'the layman' had no scruples in this regard.

4.4 *Old French Religious Literature*

In *Dets wie onse vrouwe een besloten boegaert es* we encounter in the description of one of the four orchards this allegorical interpretation of a ditch:

> De rigde van desen boegarde sal wesen wisheit van der screfturen, sit in Latin, sit in Walschen, sit in Ditschen, want die sulen bedoyen den boegart van onsen herten ende duen dragen vrogt van guden werken.[159]
>
> [The ditch of this orchard shall be the Scriptures, be it in Latin, or French, or Dutch, for it shall bedew the orchard of our heart and allow it to bear the fruit of good works.]

Entirely in passing Ls. 46 refers here to a trilingual situation: Latin, French and Dutch *screfture* can bring it about that the orchard of the heart is bedewed with wisdom. Apart from the fact that Latin and vernacular religious literature are here placed on an equal footing, it is the reference to French that is especially intriguing. This appears in several corpus manuscripts and must therefore have already been present in phase H*.[160] Ls. 46 and the other *Limburg sermons* must thus stem from a region where French and Dutch functioned side-by side. Brabant and the Maasland region, where we must after all look for the home of the oldest collection of Middle Dutch sermons, was—and still is—indeed transected by the boundary line separating the Romance and Germanic language families.[161]

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[159] Kern 1895, 631:10–13.

[160] The other mss. containing Ls. 46 treat this passage unevenly. In Br1, from Brabant, it appears in its original form: *Die van desen boogaert sal wesen wijsheit der scriftueren, het si in Walsch of in Latijn of in Duutsche* (f. 152v). But for MS Leeuwarden, Provinsjale en Bumabibliotheek, 685 Ms., which originated in Wijk bij Duurstede, the reference to a trilingual situation apparently had no relevance and its import was generalized to: *Die risen van desen boemgaert is wijsheit der scriftueren want die leringe der scriften* (f. 121rb).

[161] This kind of reference is a familiar phenomenon, as e.g. in the *Leven van Lutgart*, where Willem van Affligem (in Brabant, northwest of Brussels) wonders why people *andre goede exempelkine, in Didsch, in Walsch ende Latine bescreven, achter laten bliven* [ignore other good exempla, written in Dutch, French and Latin] and prefer heroic narratives (*Corpus Gysseling* vol. II–5, 6:53–55; cf. Spaans & Jongen 1996, 36:53–55). There is a reference as well in the prologue to the *Nederrijns moraalboek* [Nether-Rhinish Book of

Much has already been said in this book about the connections between the *Limburg sermons* and Middle High German literature. Hardly any attempts have been made to look for connections with the geographically more proximate religious literature in French. The reference in Ls. 46—the importance of which should not be exaggerated—reveals that in the milieu in which the *Limburg sermons* were composed the existence of a Walloon tradition was a given. But precisely which texts they knew is not clear, despite the range of possibilities. Just in terms of the sermons alone, Old French has an older and richer tradition than Middle Dutch. The French-speaking Low Countries and the neighboring northern France prove to have been of pre-eminent significance. In addition to the already mentioned late twelfth-century manuscript containing Canticle sermons by Bernard of Clairvaux, in the same period translations of the homiliary of Haymo of Auxerre were produced as well as a series of twelve sermons by Gregory the Great on the book of Ezekiel.[162]

In the thirteenth century of the *Limburg sermons* sermon literature flourished in this region as never before, as shown for example by *Le palmier*, the redaction E of the Palm Tree treatise, which indirectly comprised the source for Ls. 31. This Canticle sermon must have been composed before 1220, probably in Picardy (see § 2.3). The French-speaking Low Countries and the contiguous northern French regions are well represented in the transmission of vernacular sermons. Zink connects this Walloon abundance in part to the Beguine movement, which has its roots in this very region.[163] He attributes to the Cistercians, the most important pillar of the Beguine movement in the area, a crucial role in the advent of religious literature in Old French,

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Morals] to a context in which *Walsg* and *Dutsg* function side-by-side (*Corpus Gysseling* II–6, 355,24). More passages are cited in De Grauwe 2003, who attempts to make a credible case for interpreting the terms *Walsch* and *Dietsch* as referrring in the Middle Ages to the entire Romance and Germanic language areas, respectively.

[162] Bernard: ms. Nantes, Musée Dobrée, 5 (see Zink 1976, 28–32; Cf. § 1.2); Haymo: ms. Paris, BA, 2083, dated ca. 1200 and based on the dialect, with a provenance of Lotharingia (Zink 1976, 74–78); Gregorius: ms. Berne, Bibliothèque de la Bourgeoisie, 79, from the middle of the 12th century, the language is Lotharingian, and (fragmentary) ms. Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, 244, early 13th century and Walloon (see Zink 1976, 72–74). Ruh 1979, 580 is of the opinion that these three translations do not belong to the corpus of sermon literature in the strictest sense of the term, but should rather be considered patristic literature; cf. Zink 1976, 163 and 190–191.

[163] Zink 1977, 71–72.

without, however, providing much by way of concrete evidence.[164] An Old French translation of the *usus* of the female Cistercians in the Rule of St. Benedict is one of the only extant results of the efforts of the Cistercians, but that will not have been used by Beguines.[165]

Anyone wanting to chart the medieval religious literature of the northern part of France, cannot possibly ignore the phenomenon of the female religious movement in Liège/Brabant. How both of these phenomena are interrelated is still, however, unclear. It is not my intention to attempt a solution to this problem here. Nor will I provide a comprehensive overview or a critical analysis of Walloon religious literature, as that would go well beyond both the scope of this study and my own expertise. What I am concerned with here is to provide an impression of what was available in terms of vernacular religious literature south of the linguistic boundary when the *Limburg sermons* were compiled, and of the relationships in which this literature came into being.[166]

> Somewhere in the present-day Walloon provinces, perhaps even in the city of Liège, the *Poème moral* was composed ca. 1200, a text that counts as one of the most splendid products of early Old French literature.[167] The central theme in this poem in verse is the question of what the proper lifestyle is for a Christian, more specifically how one could best do penance for one's sins. Guides for this are among others the *vitae* of the Ethiopian abbot Moyses and the Egyptian anchoress Thaïs, which were taken from the *Vitaspatrum*. But there are also allusions to heroes of secular literature, such as Charlemagne, Apollonius of Tyre and Aiol. The anonymous author, who is thought to have been a member of the secular clergy, propounds the unusual viewpoint that those who enter monasteries choose an admirable path, but that it testifies to a great deal more strength when one remains in the world and has to deal with worldly temptations. The *Poème moral* has a fairly broad textual tradition,

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[164] Zink 1976, 135–137, especially in reference to McDonnell 1954, 170–186.

[165] Ed. Guignard 1878, 407–642. On the only ms. containing these texts (Dijon, Bibliothèque Publique, Ms 599 (*olim* 352) see pp. LXXIV–LXXXVIII and Choisselet & Vernet 1989, section 'Sources principales the la présente édition'; it is dated to around the year 1300. Jungbluth 1899, 681–686 localised the language of the ms. in the triangle Douai-Orchies-Valenciennes. Cf. Zink 1976, 136; Zink also links Guiard of Laon's twelve-fruits sermon to the Cistercians and stresses the importance of Guiard as an advocate of their spirituality.

[166] An overview of Walloon literature down the centuries is provided by Lejeune 1942; especially on pp. 18–25, for the period up to 1300, it demonstrated that this literature is very religiously oriented and in the vanguard of the French-speaking regions.

[167] Ed. Bayot 1929; for a brief treatment see Beyer & Koppe 1970, no. 2304 and Hasenohr & Zink [z.jr.], 1198–1199.

with a concentration especially in the thirteenth century.[168] Often only the life of Thaïs is transmitted, which may indicate a female audience (anchoresses?). Can it be that this text should be regarded as a pamphlet against the controversial Beguine movement flourishing in Liège, which drew so many people to adopt a religious lifestyle?

Liège, located only a few kilometers from the language boundary, was especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries one of the most important cultural centers in Western Europe. The city on the Meuse drew scholars from all points of the compass and constituted for that reason prime fertile ground for literary activities.[169] But Liège was also the scene of far-reaching social changes, one of the most fundamental of which was the rise of a class of craftsmen. Shortly after the middle of the twelfth century the priest Lambert of Theux (†1177) embarked on his spectacular activities. From the thirteenth century on he is identified in chronicles and other historical documents as Lambert li Bègues, the legendary founder of the Beguine movement. Lambert of Theux, himself of humble parentage, lent pastoral support to the new class of tanners, weavers and other workers. The unusual behavior of these people compelled Lambert by his own report to give unconventional advice. Thus he advised his followers to work in the garden on Sundays, which contradicted Christian rules of living. Lambert, however, thought that it was better than hanging around idle, and abandoning oneself to loafing and debauchery, for that was what the crafts folk in Liège were wont to do on Sundays and holidays.[170]

In the scholarly literature the legendary figure of Lambert li Bègues has come under gradually more critical scrutiny. In a tightly-argued study of the sources Jean Goossens has shown how Lambert of Theux could get caught up in this mystification.[171] The priest from Liège had to justify himself, at the instigation of antagonistic clergy from his own city, first before the bishop, and later before the Pope for his unorthodox actions as pastor. At his defense he made an appeal to among other things a document entitled *Antigraphum Petri*, in which a certain Peter inveighed bitterly against church dignitaries in Liège. Whether Lambert was the author or

[168] For information on the transmission, see especially Bayot 1929, X–LIV.

[169] A general history of Liège in the middle ages is provided by Kurth 1910; on the world of the magisters and the university, see Renardy 1979 (on the literary life, especially 349–389).

[170] On Lambert's pastoral views, see further Goossens 1984, 48–53.

[171] Goossens 1984; cf. Simons 2001, 24–34.

not is unclear, but the *Antigraphum* is found in the same manuscript containing six *Epistles* that are most certainly by Lamberts hand.[172]

In *Epistle VI* Lambert of Theux sketches in an apology directed at pope Calixtus III (ruled 1130–1178) the deep piety that was manifest among his followers. They devoted themselves passionately to prayer, and during Mass they received the body of Christ with the utmost devoutness. The eighth point of criticism against which Lambert defended himself in *Epistle VI*, is the translation of scripture and other religious writings.[173] In order to meet the needs of his followers he had made a number of such works available in translation. Lambert translated the life of St. Agnes into the local dialect especially for a few devout women, and he produced a Romance translation in verse of the *Acta Apostolorum*, which he sprinkled with good advice.[174] According to less reliable sources Lambert was also the translator of the so-called 'psalter of Lambert li Bègues', a manuscript produced at the Beguine house Saint-Christophe in Liège. There is an illustration of *sires Lambers* (with nimbus) in this manuscript, wherein a translation of the Letters of Paul *en nostre lengage* [in our language] is also attributed to him.[175]

The 'psalter of Lambert li Bègues' (London, British Library, Add. 21.114) has given rise to a number of misunderstandings.[176] There is a group of

[172] The six *Epistles*, accompanied by a paraphrase in Dutch, are edited in Fredericq 1896, 9–35; they were edited anew, this time together with the *Antigraphum Petri*, by Fayen 1899. A new edition of both works was announced in Goossens 1984, but to my knowledge never appeared.

[173] Cf. Goossens 1984, 63.

[174] *Unde et ego bonis eorum studiis cooperans, uirginibus uitam et passionem beate uirginis et Christi martyris Agnetis, omnibus uero generaliter Actus Apostolorum rithmicis concrepantes modulis, ad linguam sibi notiorem a Latina transfuderam, multis loco congruo insertis exhortationibus, ut uidelicet haberent quo diebus festis, mundo in rebus pessimis exultante, a uenenato ipsius melle sese reuocare potuissent* (Goossens 1984, 50 n. 26, which Fayen 1899, 352:22–28 corrects on a few points). For Lambert's literary activities, cf. among others Mens 1947, 415–416, McDonnell 1954, 71–72 and Grundmann 1977, 452–453.

[175] The illustration of Lambert appears on f. 7v; see Oliver 1988, vol. 2, plate 14. Lambert wears a banderole with the text: *Ge sui ichis lambers, nel tenez pas a fable, ki fundai sain cristophle, ki enseri ceste table* [I am Lambert, I tell you no lies, he who founded St Christopher's, he inserted this table]; he is thus the compiler of the Easter table contained in this manuscript. A later hand added the following inscription: *Cis prudom fist prumier lordne the beginage les epistles sain poul mist and nostre lengage* [This lord is the founder of the order of the Beguines, and translated the letters of St Paul into our language] (after Oliver 1988, vol. 1, 109).

[176] On the ms. see Oliver 1988, vol. 2, no. 21 (pp. 266–268) and *In beeld geprezen* 1989, no. 4 (pp. 63–65). Oliver 1988, vol. 1, 109–112 identifies this psalter, that dates to the period 1255–1265, as one of the first sources in which an attempt is made to

> some dozens of thirteenth-century Latin psalters from the bishopric of Liège that show stylistic affinities with this codex. Because of the connection with Lambert li Bègues they have traditionally been considered 'Beguine psalters'. It was even claimed that the Latin of this psalter was based on an Old French translation of the psalms by Lambert. In her art historical study of this manuscript, Judith Oliver has dispelled a number of important misunderstandings.[177] There is no evidence that a twelfth-century Old French psalm translation, by Lambert or anyone else, underlies these psalters. All thirteenth-century 'Beguine psalters' have a main text in Latin, though there are a few in which some Old French material has been added (see § 4.5).[178] At most half of the 'Beguine psalters' can be linked in some other way with the Beguines, but there are also many that belonged to secular religious or lay folk.[179] Following Oliver, we now speak of 'Liège psalters.'

Unfortunately, none of the translations by Lambert of Theux have come down to us, but there is little reason to doubt the existence of a life of St. Agnes or an *Acta apostolorum* in the dialect of Liège in the late twelfth century. And there was more Dutch (and possibly German) religious writings in circulation in the cathedral city on the Meuse. In a statute for the chapter of St. Lambert from 1203 the papal legate Gui of Palestrina decreed that the canons were required to hand over all Dutch and French 'books concerning holy scripture' to the bishop. Only once he had studied the books and approved them might they be returned.[180] Perhaps the translations of Lambert of Theux were confiscated on these occasions, as well. As for the Dutch books referred to by Gui of Palestrina, it is possible that in Lambert of Theux's day there was a translation of the psalms in circulation. When he defends his own translation work, Lambert refers to a glossed psalter that was

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transform the 12th-century priest into the legendary Lambert li Bègues. The reason for doing so was rather vulgar: by means of this mystification, the Beguine house was attempting to create for itself a much older history than it really had. With an appeal to the traditional right of exemption for the clergy it attempted in this way to dodge a tax levied against the entire city of Liège in 1254. Cf. Wehrli-Johns 1998, 27–30.

[177] Oliver 1988; see also Oliver 1989 and the exhibition catalogue *In beeld geprezen* 1989.

[178] Oliver 1988, vol. 1, 112. Speculation concerning the existence of a vernacular psalter for Beguines from the twelfth century is probably related to the translated psalter referred to by Lambert of Theux and which is dealt with below.

[179] Oliver 1988, vol. 1, 112–119. Simons 1991 believes that the relation between these psalters and the Beguines is a great deal more diffuse than Oliver would have us believe. See also the further discussion in Oliver 1992 and Simons 1992.

[180] *Omnes libri romane vel teotonice scripti the divinis scripturis in manum episcopi tradantur et ipse quos viderit reddendos reddat* (ed. Bormans & Schoolmeesters 1893, 134). Cf. f.i. Grundmann 1977, 447 n. 20 and Goossens 1984, 63 n. 88.

translated from Latin by a Flemish master and that in his day was widely available in Liège.[181] The language of this psalm translation is unfortunately not mentioned, but given the origin of anonymous master it could well have been Dutch.[182]

In the bishopric of Liège in the second quarter of the twelfth century a small tradition of religious literature in the vernacular had already developed. As far as is known it consisted mainly of translations of biblical texts and canonical works. In the context of the hoaxes surrounding Lambert li Bègues, the reports concerning the translation activities of Lambert of Theux were associated with the Beguines. Erroneously so. The Beguine movement began its impressive advance out of the Liège prince bishopric only after his death. Of the four oldest centers of Beguine activity identified by Walter Simons—the city of Huy, Nivelles-Oignies, the city of Liège, and the triangle Borgloon-Sint-Truiden-Zoutleeuw—only the last was located in the Dutch-speaking region.[183] The center of gravity of the movement lay clearly on the French side of the language boundary. From the outset within the context of the female religious movement religious sisters had come to the fore, not just Beguines, who by medieval standards were considered to be very literate.[184] Despite this, most of them (also) made use of vernacular literature. Thus, for example, we have Juliana of Cornillon, who read texts in both Latin and Old French and immersed herself assiduously in the works of Augustine and Bernard (see § 3.5). And an unknown sister in Liège, perhaps it was Eve of Saint-Martin, recorded the important deeds of Juliana in the Walloon dialect of the region (see § 1.5). That the Beguine movement should be associated with the flourishing of religious literature in French is thus far from surprising.

Three prominent figures from thirteenth-century female mysticism—Hadewijch, Mechtild von Magdeburg and Margaretha Porete—are on

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[181] *Est preterea apud eos liber psalmorum cum omnibus glosulis suis et auctoritatibus eas roborantibus, in uulgarem linguam a quodam magistro Flandrensi translatus. Quare the eo non queritur? Quare hunc non incusat? Propterea forsitan quia nemo propheta acceptus est in patria sua. Illo uero magister the patria eius non fuit* (ed. Goossens 1984, 63 n. 88; cf. Fayen 1899, 353:5–10).

[182] Cf. among others De Bruin 1935, vol. 1, 11, Mens 1947, 157–158 and Coun 1988, 68, who are all inclined to assume that it was a Dutch rather than a Walloon one.

[183] Simons 2001, 39–43.

[184] See Simons 2001, 80–85 and Simons 2004 for more than the examples mentioned below. Simons makes a connection between the literacy of some Beguines and the need for religious instruction that the Beguine movement carried with it from the outset, and that is expressed for example in the habit of addressing female Beguine leaders as *magistra*.

record as being Beguines. The literary oeuvres of these three authors exhibit as well close affinities in terms of contents. A central theme in all three is for example the erotic interpretation of spiritual love, which is clearly modeled on the concept of courtly love celebrated by the trouvères. Despite the great geographical distances between these areas in which these three female writers were active, their writings appear to have been inspired by one another, without there having been any demonstrable direct connections.[185] But whereas the Middle Dutch works of Hadewijch and Mechtild's Middle Low German *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit* are rather independent, it would seem that Margaretha Porete in Hainaut worked more within a literary tradition. The background of her completely self-willed *Le mirouer des ames simples anienties* is to some extent determined by a number of Old French texts that are indisputably associated with the Beguine movement.

> An interesting debate is being waged about whether or not a separate Beguine literature and spirituality existed. Kurt Ruh was of the opinion that the coherence in the works of Hadewijch, Mechtild and Porete is so strong, especially in the use of motifs from courtly literature in spiritual love, that they may be regarded as expressions of a spirituality specific to the Beguines, that can be distinguished from the piety practiced in the female monasteries.[186] Ruh would explain the courtly slant of their mysticism by the elite backgrounds of these women, whereby they would have been thoroughly familiar with the concept. But it is not necessarily the case that the female mystics from this period knew the courtly epics of their day as well as modern literary historians. Joris Reynaert rightly points out that courtly themes appear already in the works of Bernard of Clairvaux and other twelfth-century religious authors and thus is part of the mystical tradition in Latin. Reynaert acknowledges the existence of a mystic Beguine spirituality and stresses the 'status aparte' consciously assumed by the Beguines as semi-religious. Whereas nuns identified themselves with the bride of Christ, the Beguines were free to consider themselves His mistress.[187] Ursula Peters casts serious doubt on the existence of a special Beguine spirituality, especially because hardly any historical data are available for these authors that has any bearing on their lives as Beguines.[188] However this may be, the integral affinities in the mysticism of Hadewijch, Mechtild and Margaretha Porete are too striking and too exclusive to ignore. Apparently there lived among the

[185] Cf. e.g. Neumann 1965.
[186] See especially Ruh 1984e, and also Ruh 1984d, Ruh 1985 and the relevant chapters in in Ruh 1990–1999.
[187] Reynaert 1994, 220–221.
[188] Peters 1988, 41–100.

> Beguine movement and its appendant circles certain spiritual preferences which elsewhere were less pronounced. On the other hand it is also a fact that the three 'Beguine authors' must have belonged to a cultural and literary elite, which was anything but representative of the average Beguine.[189]

Various scholars have over the years concerned themselves with the Old French 'Beguine literature', but to my knowledge a systematic survey has yet to be produced.[190] (As an aside it is worth mentioning that it was especially Germanic scholars, and before them, German scholars of romance languages, who were interested in the Old French Beguine literature.)[191] In terms of structure and contents some of these texts are reminiscent of certain *Limburg sermons*. Perhaps these are the *Walsche* texts referred to in Ls. 45. In order to give an impression of this literature, what follows is a brief introduction to a number of these texts. I must necessarily restrict myself to published material, but would point out that it is especially those texts that deal directly with the Beguines and their lifestyle that have remained the focus of attention. The less explicitly religious texts that have been preserved in the same context have received hardly any attention. It is quite possible that potential connections with the *Limburg sermons*, in which the Beguines and Beghards are scarcely mentioned at all, are to be found in this too infrequently studied literature.

Among the best known Old French Beguine texts is undoubtedly *La rigle des fins amans* [The rule of refined lovers] preserved in a Berlin manuscript (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS lat.

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[189] On the religious life of an 'average' Beguine in the southern Netherlands, see Galloway 1999. Simons 2001, 91–104 analyses the social origins of the Beguines in the southern Netherlands and maintains that recruiting took place at all levels of society, even in the lower ones. There remained exceptions, such as e.g. the Beguines of Schweidnitz (Silesia), about whom we are well informed thanks to an elaborate inquisition report from the beginning of the 14th century. These sisters lived an anything but average religious life, but tried to perfect themselves by means of severe ascetism. They appear to have crossed the line of orthodoxy in the process. (see further Lerner 1972, 112–119).

[190] The most recent studies are Peters 1988, 81–89, Reynaert 1994, 218–221 and Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 366–367 and Simons 2004.

[191] Cf. the overview in Beyer & Koppe 1970, which includes some seven 'Poèmes sur les béguins' (*sic*), under the numbers 1152, 1156, 1160, 1164, 1168, 1172 and 1176. Several of the texts mentioned in the following section have also been incorporated into the three volume bibliographical overview of OF devotional literature by Sinclair 1979–1988.

oct. 264; further information on this and other manuscripts discussed in what follows is to be found in § 4.5).[192] Despite what the title might lead one to expect, *La rigle* is not so much a rule in the canon law sense, but rather a kind of manifest in which via brief passages various aspects of the free religious life are explained. In his edition of *La rigle des fins amans* Karl Christ distinguishes the following subdivisions: an explanation of the concept of *fine amors* [fine love]; a series of twelve signs whereby one can recognize the *fins amans*; the twelve joys that God gives to His *amis* [lover]; the characteristics of a *beguinaige* [Beguine house]; the four pillars on which the order of the *fins amans* is founded, namely purity, poverty, humility, love; the *coumandement*] according to which *li fin amant* [the refined lover] must behave; the clothing; four ways of praying; the relationship between the confessor and daughter in confession (in the form of a dialogue); the attitude toward the world and, finally, an allegorical discourse on the personification of *Conscience* who is on a quest to find her *ami*, concluding with a short monorime. It is not too difficult to recognize in the structure of *La rigle* certain parallels with the *Limburg sermons*: here, too, we find a modular structure, numerical series, a certain eclecticism and a predilection for allegories.

Already in the nineteenth century E. Bechmann edited three *Dits de l'âme* [Discourse of the soul] which he considered to be Beguine texts, after another Berlin manuscript (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS gall. oct. 28).[193] The authors employed a verse form typical of this *dit* genre, namely the so-called Helinand stanza (rhyming aab/aab/bba/bba), a form that belonged especially in learned milieus.[194] The first poem of 36 stanzas bears no inscription. It opens with the words *Douls Jhesucris* [sweet Jesus Christ] and is in fact a long prayer to sweet Christ. Most striking is the great intimacy with Christ displayed by the author. The Lord is consistently addressed with the words *doul(s) amis* [sweet lover], which occurs in a number of the *Limburg*

[192] Ed. Christ 1927, 192–206; Beyer & Koppe 1970, no. 1172. As far as I can see, scholars has assumed the existence of just one manuscript containing *La rigle*, but in ms. London, British Library, Royal 16.E.XII, f. 295 there appears a text bearing the incipit *Ci commence la riule et lordenance des finz amans* [Here begins the rule and the order of the refined lovers]. It would appear to be the same text, but I have not been able to follow this trail.

[193] Ed. Bechmann 1889, 56–80; on the ms. see the following section. Beyer & Koppe 1970, nos. 1156, 1160 and 1176.

[194] On the Helinand stanza see Willaert 1992, 115–116; cf. Reynaert 1994, 217.

sermons as well (see below).[195] The second *dit* bears the inscription *Chi apriés s'ensieuent autres viers dous, sains, biaus, devos* [Hereafter follows other sweet, holy, beautiful, pious verses]. This is a primer in spiritual love in sixteen stanzas. The third poem deals emphatically with Beguines, for it begins with the rhetorical question *Savés que j'apiel beghinage* [Do you know what I call a Beguine house?]? In 21 stanzas and with the help of a range of imagery—among which are textile production and the siege of a tower—it explains how the soul of the Beguine can come closer to God.

Finally, Alfons Hilka edited a number of Beguine texts from a now-lost manuscript from Metz of ca. 1300 (Metz, Bibliothèque Municipale, 535). There are three poems: *A Dieu proier me tornerai* [I turn in prayer to God], *Qui vuet droit beguinage avoir* [He who would follow the true beguinage] and *Je di que c'est folie pure* [I say that it is pure madness].[196] I restrict myself here to a description of the first text, which exhibits a remote affinity with the *Limburg sermons*. *A Dieu proier me tornerai* begins with a number of monorimes of unequal length, in which the number of syllables is varied. The vision that constitutes the core of this text is constructed of octosyllabic lines. It is not so much rhyme as assonance that we are dealing with here. The vision described is one that occurs rather frequently in the *Minnerede* genre.[197] The I-figure is walking through the forest and hears the lamentations of a lady who pines for the love of God. She has given everything to Jesus, and still she has not received His love. A bird assures here that she will some day possess Him and then disappears into the forest. The damsel remains behind in sorrow, but is subsequently consoled by virtues. She surrenders to Meditation, as she lies on a bed of Poverty, with Caritas as a pillow and Humility as her blanket. When in a state of mystic ecstasy the pining damsel does indeed behold the holy Child in paradise, an allegorical feast is prepared for him in which all manner of other religious virtues are personified.[198]

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[195] Zink 1976, 136 notes that many texts in the twin manuscripts Arsenal 2058 and Mazarine 788 (see § 1.2) are aimed at an otherwise unspecified *amie*. For these mss., which among other texts contain *Le palmier*, Zink 1976, 51–57.

[196] Ed. Hilka 1927, 126–142 (Beyer & Koppe 1970, no. 1152), 145–153 (1168) and 154 (1164), respectively.

[197] On the dream in the German *Minnerede* see Glier 1971, 397–399; for the MDu. see Hogenelst 1997, vol. 1, 134–135.

[198] Phrasing and structure of this allegorical vision are reminiscent of the *Tochter Syon* and other texts related to it (see § 1.4).

The bed of the damsel in *A Dieu proier me tornerai* is reminiscent of the *verwent bedde* [blessed bed] prepared by Minne and her allegorical companions in *Dbuec van den boegarde* (Ls. 39) for the bride and her beloved. Here the bed stands for Burning desire, the sheets are Pure conscience and Freedom from Care, the spread is four shades of purple, each of which symbolizes a virtue, and finally the pillow stands for Spiritual drunkenness.[199] In Ls. 39 there are also a number of scenes that are reminiscent of the dawn song tradition, when it is described how the caressing lovers, lying on their bed of *minne*, are awoken by a watchman. Although dawn song poetry usually celebrates secular love, the theme can easily be transposed to divine love. The authors of 'Beguine literature' proved to be creative in making such allusions to erotic love. Perhaps the for Middle Dutch very early application of the dawn song theme and the spiritual bed of *minne* in Ls. 39 are therefore to be explained by a certain familiarity with French sources, rather than with a High German tradition (see § 2.5). There is an allusion to the bed of *minne* as well in the Ripuarian *Buch der Minne*, which is cotemporaneous with *Dbuec van den boegarde*.[200] The area of dissemination of the mystic *minne*-motifs is therefore quite large, though we do not have a clear picture of their mutual relationships.[201]

There are more *Limburg sermons* in which aspects of the religious *minne* theme appear, which appear to reveal connections with Old French traditions.[202] In a couple of the interpolated sermons the Bridegroom is sometimes addressed with the term *amis*, a somewhat unusual form to find in Middle Dutch. This is most obvious in *Dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* (Ls. 43), where *amis* is the normal form.[203] In Ls. 31 we see that the translator was influenced by his German exemplar and consistently

[199] Kern 1895, 544,10–21.

[200] Cf. Willeumier-Schalij 1946, 49:29–50:13.

[201] On the backgrounds of bed imagery in religious literature and iconography, see Lerchner 1993, 271–348.

[202] Sometimes we are dealing with only very vague traces. Thus Mary is represented in Ls. 16 (Rd. 57) as the viscountess of the heart; in the MDu. text it is stated that in her house are present *hofschen ende walgeracden* [courteous and excellent] damsels (Kern 1895, 364:31), while the reference to courtliness in the MHG text is absent altogether (G, f. 79rb). Zink 1976 161–162 observes aspects of chivalry in Guiard of Laon's sermon on the twelve fruits (Cf. Boeren 1956, 255–256), which leads him to suspect that the audience for the text was familiar with the culture of the nobility.

[203] Passages where *amis* is found in the *LS*: Ls. 31 (Kern 1895, 464:15–16), Ls. 35 (Kern 1895, 500:11) and especially Ls. 43 (Kern 1895, 584:1 and 8, 592:4, 593:6, 595:9, 596:16 and 597:14, 26, 28 and 31). Cf. Scheepsma 2001b.

translates *minner* with *minner.* But in one instance he breaks this habit: *ende kere alle dinen vlit in din amis van alle din herten* [and direct all of your ardor toward your beloved with all of your heart].[204] The word *amis* is not unusual in early Middle Dutch mysticism. It appears frequently, for example, in Hadewijch, who we know for certain was very familiar with the Old French trouvère lyrics. The compiler of the *Limburg sermons* must have had some knowledge of this tradition, for how else can we explain why he abandoned his German model, when it offered a term that he did not even have to translate?

We do not know exactly which Walloon text the author of *Dets wie onse vrouwe een besloten boegaert es* had in mind. His references do not have to imply that religious literature in French had a direct influence on the *Limburg sermons*. I do hope to have demonstrated that there are real affinities in terms of content, in particular between some of the interpolated *Limburg sermons*, the fairly heavily adapted Ls. 31 and a number of Old French writings that are reckoned among the literature of the Beguines. Moreover, we may certainly not rule out the possibility that in the voluminous corpus of religious literature from the northern part of the Old French language area more texts are to be found that have an affinities with certain *Limburg sermons*, or perhaps may even have provided the model for one or more text. The reference in Ls. 46 is thus certainly no accident. The author of this sermon, as well as the compiler of the *Limburg sermons*, were familiar with the very important mystico-religious tradition in their immediate vicinity, on the other side of the language border.

4.5 *Connections in the Old French Transmission*

The Old French 'Beguine literature' currently known to exist (see § 4.4) is for the most part preserved in three manuscripts, which contain other religious texts in French, as well. If we take into consideration the manuscripts' provenance and their further contents, the Beguine aspect is put into perspective. Charting this tradition and other related manuscripts should bring us fairly close to the vicinity of the *Limburg sermons*. This initial exploration of certain connections in the trans-

[204] Kern 1895, 464:16; immediately before this, in r. 12 *minner* is still employed. Manuscript G reads *minner* twice here (Rieder 1908, 275:32 and 35).

mission of Old French religious literature should bring into relief the reference in Ls. 46 to Walloon *screfture*.

The known and edited 'Beguine texts' that we were introduced to in the previous section are preserved in three manuscripts, which will be introduced briefly here. Two of the most important codices are held in Berlin. Manuscript lat. oct. 264 dates to the second half of the thirteenth century and will have been written somewhere in Picardy. This manuscript is predominantly filled with Latin treatises of a theological/homiletic nature, but contains as well three short works in Old French. The best known is *La rigle des fins amans* [The rule of refined lovers], that is preserved complete only in this Berlin manuscript.[205] If this is a text that does indeed unmistakably relate to the Beguine lifestyle, the other two are both much more general in tenor. These are *Le palmier*, the Old French *ur*-version of redaction E of the Palm Tree treatise, and a commentary on the sacrament of the Mass, which has not been edited. The connection in terms of contents with the *Limburg sermons* is clear, despite the fact that the Middle Dutch is based on the Middle High German redaction SG, rather than on *Le palmier*. The treatise on the Mass is related at a far greater remove to Ls. 40, the sermon on the twelve fruits of the Eucharist.

> Manuscript Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS lat. oct. 264 is, given the dialect, of Picardian origin and as an owner's mark attests, belonged in the fifteenth century to the Celestines at Amiens (founded in 1401).[206] But it has a far older history, for the script points to the thirteenth century. Given the dominant share of Latin in this codex, a place of origin in a Beguine community is not likely. Ms. 264 contains three Old French religious works: *Le palmier* (ff. 82v–85v), *La rigle des fins amans* (ff. 85v–90v) and a brief discourse on the ritual of the Mass (ff. 91r–92r). Karl Christ prepared editions of both the *Le palmier* and the *La rigle*.[207] The codex is preserved in a damaged state; a reference on f. 84r to a *Contemplatio supra passionem domini…qui se commence pour ce vous supplie* [Contemplation on the Passion of the Lord…which begins 'For this I ask you'] reveals that it had at any rate once contained a contemplation of the Passion in Old French.

[205] Ms. Metz 535 (see further in the text) contains a series of ten signs for recognizing a good Beguine that are strongly reminiscent of what *La rigle* has to offer (cf. Christ 1927, 206 and Meyer 1886, 46 (no. 6)).

[206] On the ms. Christ 1926, 61–63 and Christ 1927, 179–180.

[207] Christ 1926, 70–80 and Christ 1927, 192–206, respectively.

The second Berlin manuscript, that bears the signature gall. oct. 28, is widely known because it contains the three *Dits de l'âme* that are included at the end of it. That this codex opens with a brief exemplum about the Beguine who defends her lifestyle against a master from Paris, is revealing in the context of its performance milieu.[208] The same holds true at least as clearly for the *dit* that begins with the line *Savés que j'apiel beghinage?* [Do you know what I call a Beguine house?] The manuscript contains no direct indications, however, that would point to its having been owned by a Beguine. The aforementioned texts are preserved together with dozens of Old French pieces of a pious nature, prose mixed with poetry. Going by the titles and the inscriptions—I have not been able to consult the manuscript—there are amongst them various texts that organize certain theological or catechetical information in the form of enumerated lists. *Chi apriés commenchent XII article de le sainte foy crestÿene, qui sont contenu ou grant credo* [Here follow twelve articles on the holy christian faith, which are contained in the Credo] (ff. 28r–32v) is one of the most elaborated texts: consistently, first in Latin and then in French, an article from the creed is here linked to one of the twelve apostles. In MS 28 we also find a twelve fruits treatise in rhyming prose, but it deals with the active life: *Che sont les XII fruis de le vie active selonc saint Augustin* [These are the twelve fruits of the active life according to Saint Augustine] (f. 110r). The way in which these texts are structured thus reveals some degree of affinity with the structure of certain of the *Limburg sermons*. At first glance this is also the case for a text such as the orchard allegory *Boins coers desirans iestre arbres gratiëus, fruit de vie portans* [A good heart desiring gracious trees, bearing fruits of life] (ff. 103v–109), in which the heart of the religious is associated with the root, stem, branches, blossoms and fruits of the tree.

> Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, gall. oct. 28 is dated to the early fourteenth century based on the script.[209] The entire contents is in Old French and the dialect points to the extreme north of the region of the 'langue d'oeil', probably the area in the vicinity of Lille. Bechmann counts a total of 24 works, but notes that the boundaries between texts is not always clear. There is a partial parallel of *Savés que j'apiel beghinage?*

[208] Ed. Hilka 1927, 123. This motif appears, in a very abbreviated form, in Ls. 13, as well: *Die minste sele die in himelrike es, die es wiser dan alle die mestere van Paris* [The least soul in the kingdom of heaven is wiser than all the masters of Paris] (Kern 1895, 326:8–9); it also appears in Rd. 54 (G, f. 64ra and Rieder 1908, 220:1–2).

[209] On the ms. see Bechmann 1889, 35–39 and Hilka 1927, 121–123.

in MS Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 9411–9426, in which it bears the title *dis de l'ame*.[210]

The third Beguine manuscript', which has unfortunately been lost, originated in a male monastery at Metz. Nevertheless this codex, filled as it was with Old French religious literature, at any rate contained three texts that deal directly or indirectly with the religious life of the Beguines. Of these three *Qui vuet droit beguinage avoir* [He who would follow the true beguinage] is of particular interest because it does not deal with Beguines, but rather with *beguins*, i.e. Beghards. The text argues for poverty as the ideal religious state for Beghards. It puts them at the same level as the *freres menours*, but in the same breath the author draws a connection to Bernard of Clairvaux, who linked the ideal of poverty with a life of intensive prayer. Only amongst the followers of Bernard and Francis do we find true practitioners of the poverty ideal—and by the Beghards, we may assume. In *Que vuet droit beguinage avoir* the religious ideal of the Beghards are thus anchored in the spirituality of the Franciscans and the Cistercians, orders who both contributed to the spiritual care of the Beguines and Beghards.[211]

Ms. Metz, Bibliothèque Municipale, 535, that was lost during the World War II, dated to the late thirteenth of early fourteenth century.[212] It was written in the Lotharingian dialect and resided in the library of the monastery of St. Arnulf in Metz. The Beguine texts are found amidst dozens of other Old French religious works, including sermons, but especially many poetic texts, such as lyrics and roundels. The manuscript opens with an old favorite, namely *Le palmier* (ff. 1–7). The three works counted among Beguine literature and edited by Hilka are *A Dieu proier me tornerai* (ff. 128r–140v), *Qui vuet droit beguinage avoir* (ff. 153v–161r) and *Je di que c'est*

[210] For the contents of this ms. see Scheler 1866, XIII–XXV; here ff. 103r–v (no. 23), *C'est uns dis de l'ame* [This is a discourse of the soul]. Of the fifteen stanzas that comprise the poem, Bechmann 1889, 78–80 edits the four that deviate from what we find in the Berlin ms.

[211] Meyer 1884, 77–79 edits a *Chansons d'amor de pure povreteit* [Love song about pure poverty] from a 13th-century ms. that comes from a female convent in Metz, possibly the female Benedictines of St. Sulpice and St. Glossinde. In this poem John the Baptist and Francis of Assisi are represented as heralds of the poverty movement. Ms. Leuven, UB, G 53 (see further) also contains on ff. 171r–172v a poem about poverty (Bayot 1929, XVII).

[212] The contents of this ms. are discussed in detail in Meyer 1886 and Långfors 1933, 141–160; Cf. Bechmann 1899, 123, Christ 1926, 60 and Christ 1927, 180–181. Although it woud seem from the incipits in Meyer 1886 that it contains its share of OF sermons, in Zink 1976 Metz 535 is not listed as a 13th-century sermon manuscript; that he knew the codex is clear, among other places, from p. 485 (no. 30).

folie pure (ff. 170v–171r).[213] I mention as well *Conment on doit dire ces hores* [How one is to say one's Hours] (ff. 120–123), which will be discussed below. The manuscript ends abruptly; some text has thus been lost.

Le palmier appears in two of the three Beguine manuscripts under discussion, namely in Metz 535 and in Berlin lat. oct. 246. This may be a redaction E version of the Palm Tree treatise, but in terms of tome and contents the text shows close affinities with the German and Dutch SG redaction. *Le palmier* is preserved in another seven manuscripts from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. Those manuscripts come almost exclusively from the northern part of the French-speaking area, but in quite a few instances further data concerning their owners and users is wanting. According to Zink, *Le palmier* usually travels with other vernacular sermons. This is the case, for example, in the thirteenth-century twin manuscripts Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 2058 and Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, 788, which in addition to the palm tree sermon contain numerous other Old French sermons. The Arsenal manuscript is the one cited above, in which the dikes and ditches are allegorized (see § 1.2).[214] In the thirteenth century the geographical center of gravity of the transmission of *Le palmier* lay clearly in the French speaking region. The milieu in which texts then functioned is less easy to determine. Both of the manuscripts discussed here can (perhaps) be linked to the Beguines. It is difficult to determine for whom the other manuscripts, such as Arsenal 2058 and Mazarine 788, were made, other than that the readers are regularly addressed as *amie*.

In a similar fashion, transmission networks may be woven together for some of the other texts presented here. In the manuscript from Metz an Old French translation of the Hours of the Cross appears under the inscription *Conment on doit dire ces hores*. We find this text as well in a late thirteenth-century Liège psalter (London, British Library, MS. Harley 2930) that otherwise contains almost exclusively Latin material. The two other places where these Old French Hours of the Cross texts are

[213] Hilka 1927.

[214] Fleischer 1976, 43 dates the following mss. containing redaction E in the period under discussion: Berlin, SPK, lat.oct. 264 (B8); Lyon, Bibliothèque the la Ville, 867 (Ly); Metz, Bibliothèque Municipale, 535 (Mz); Paris, BN, fr. 6447 (P3); Paris, BA, 937 (P4); Paris, BA, 2111 (P5); Paris, BA, 2058 (P6); Paris, BM, 788 (P 9). Zink 1976, 485 (no. 30) adds ms. London, British Library, Royal 16.E.XII; he lists a total of thirteen mss. containing *Le palmier*, but as far as I have been able to determine this list contains some later ones. For many of these manuscripts, see also Christ 1926, 59–61.

found are a compilation manuscript from Hainaut containing vernacular material and a late thirteenth-century Book of Hours for a lady from Metz. These Old French Hours of the Cross texts appear thus primarily in manuscripts that fulfilled a function in private devotion for pious women, who need not necessarily have been Beguines.[215]

> The Liège psalter MS London, British Library, MS. Harley 2930 was produced ca. 1280 in a Brabantine workshop, probably for a female client from the bishopric of Huy.[216] This Book of Hours also appears in Metz 535, dated to about 1300. The text is also preserved in the French compilation manuscript Oporto, Biblioteca Publica Municipal, 619, of about 1280 with a place of origin in Hainaut. Finally, there is the fourteenth-century Book of Hours from Metz, Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, Walters 91, which contains both the French and the Latin texts.[217]

The Liège psalter Harley 2930 subsequently contains a second Old French text, namely *Des XII preus que li sacremens fait* [The twelve fruits produced by the sacrament] This is the Old French version of the twelve fruits sermon by Guiard of Laon, a Middle Dutch translation of which is found in Ls. 40. To date three thirteenth-century manuscripts *Des XII preus* are known.[218] In addition to Harley 2930 these are a manuscript from the female Benedictine abbey of Origny (see § 2.6) and manuscript Paris fr. 6447, which, given its sumptuous workmanship, must have been made by commission of a client belonging to the highest circles of nobility. These manuscripts, too, stem from the northern portion of the French-speaking area. All three belonged to women, though they cannot be linked to any one specific milieu (and thus not to Beguines, either). But it goes practically without saying that not only nuns or Beguines would have had an interest in the twelve fruits of the holy sacrament in the thirteenth century, but lay folk, as well.

> P.C. Boeren, the editor of *Des XII preus*, was aware at the time of only one thirteenth-century manuscript, namely St. Quentin, Bibliothèque Municipale, 75 (86), ff. 529r–543r, which he of course used as his base

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[215] For the OF Hours of the Cross, see Oliver 1994, 251–253; Sinclair 1979–1988, vol. 2 includes the prologue and the seven hours as separate items under the numbers 4070 (though in this case it is with reference to the Metz ms.), 3903, 3901, 3902, 3905, 3900, 3923, 3885.

[216] On this ms. see Oliver 1988, vol. 2, no. 21 (pp. 266–268) and *In beeld geprezen* 1989, no. 5 (pp. 66–68).

[217] For more on ms. Oporto, see Oliver 1994, 253 n. 37.

[218] Oliver 1994, 253–256.

text. From an inscription in the manuscript we know that it was made in 1286 by commission of Helins de Confflans, a nun in the female Benedictine convent at Origny-Sainte-Benoîte.[219] This nun is also on record under the name Heluis d'Escoufflans as having commissioned a brilliantly executed manuscript (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 B 16, from 1312) containing a *Vie de Sainte Benoîte*, which may be considered the deluxe counterpart to the humbly executed manuscript from Saint-Quentin.[220] In Harley 2930 (see above) *Des XII preus* appears on ff. 183r–193v; the third thirteenth-century manuscript with this text is Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fr. 6447, ff. 360r–361v (see below) from ca. 1280, which among other things contains a few Old French translations of historical books of the Bible, a series of saints lives, and sermons and treatises (among which *Le palmier*).[221] *Des XII preus* continued to enjoy a certain degree of popularity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as well.[222]

In the splendidly illuminated manuscript fr. 6447, there is also a chronicle that devotes a great deal of attention to the events in Flanders and Hainaut. Given that the historical narrative ends ca. 1275, the manuscript will not have been produced much later. Moreover, there are stylistic arguments for a dating to the last quarter of the thirteenth century. The legend of Martha in this codex is dedicated to a countess of Flanders, probably Margaret of Champagne (1244–1280). The combination of these facts with the Picardian dialect used in fr. 6447 and the style of illumination led Oliver to suspect that this splendid manuscript was commissioned by Margaret of Flanders.[223] This Old French manuscript from the highest secular circles is ultimately the one—at least as far as my sources go—that in terms of contents stands the closest to the *Limburg sermons* collection. It contains both *Des XII preus* and *Le palmier*, the two Old French texts for which there are equivalents in the Middle Dutch sermon collection. It may be somewhat surprising to find these religious works in such a thoroughly secular context.

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[219] Ed. Boeren 1956, 310–319. On the ms. see Boeren 1956, 130–131, Zink 1976, 79 and Oliver 1994, 254.

[220] See Hamburger 1998, 90–91.

[221] The manuscript is described in detail by Meyer 1896, but he makes no mention of *Des XII preus*; see Zink 1976, 62–67. Cf. Christ 1926, 59 and Oliver 1994, 254. Ms. fr. 6447 resided between 1467 and 1647 in the library of the Duke of Burgundy. Zink 1976, 62 identifies parallels with ms. Paris, BA, 5201 (see Meyer 1887), dating as well to the end of the 13th century and possibly produced for a wealthy client in Lotharingia.

[222] See Zink 1976, 484 (no. 30).

[223] Oliver 1994, 254. The ms. also contains a legend of Quentin, which is dedicated by the author, Huon le Roy from Cambrai, to King Philip the Bold of France (1270–1285).

But if MS fr. 6447 was indeed produced for Margaret of Flanders, this apparent contradiction may be fairly readily dispelled. Margaret created a distinct profile for herself as a staunch patron of Cistercians and Beguines. It would thus be difficult to deny that she had a keen interest in the religious life.[224]

One might be justified in countering that by shuffling and reshuffling texts and manuscripts in this way, it would as it were be easy find connections between every medieval text. It should be clear that looking for connections in the transmission some degree of restraint must be exercised. And yet the network charted here does tell us something about the literary historical backgrounds of *Des XII preus* and *Le palmier*, and perhaps something about their Middle Dutch counterparts, as well. The manuscripts provide the hard evidence for the existence of these texts at a certain point in time and in a certain milieu. This does not mean that no questions remain. Many manuscripts surrender hardly any data at all about their place of origins or the milieu for which they were written. And whether the texts were actually read and led to more deeply penetrating reception usually remains hidden in obscurity. But by using the available information on the transmission it is sometimes possible to construct a consistent picture of the context in which certain texts functioned. For *Des XII preus* and *Le palmier*, at any rate, it seems to me that this attempt has been successful.

> The network outlined here could easily be expanded, for example with the predominantly Latin manuscript Leuven, Universiteitsbibliotheek, G 53.[225] This fourteenth-century manuscript contains among other things the *Legenda aurea* and the *Elucidarium* in Latin, but a number of French texts have been added at the end. Among them is a portion of the *Poème moral*, namely the life of Thaïs. On ff. 171–187 there is a block of texts that also appear in Metz 535, among which one of the Beguine texts. The vision that constitutes the core of the allegorical poem *A Dieu proier me tornerai* and that begins in Metz 535 with the line *Quant li mundain sont endormi* [When the worldly people are asleep], is found here on ff. 172b–174b, with the incipit *Quant li mondains sunt endormis*.[226] The Leuven manuscript, which dates to ca. 1311, resided for a long time in the library of the Benedictine monastery of St. Jacques. This abbey in Liège possessed at least one more thirteenth-century manuscript containing Old French texts, including ten sermons on Lent: Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek,

[224] For Margaret's involvement with religious foundations, see § 1.5.
[225] On this ms. see Bayot 1929, XVI–XXI; cf. Reynaert 1994, 219–220.
[226] Cf. Långfors 1933, 140 and 144.

> fonds Serrure 1.[227] This shows once again the importance of Liège as a center of early religious literature in Old French.[228]

Despite the restrictions inherent in the overview presented in the last two sections, the contours of early Old French religious literature of the Southern Netherlands have nevertheless been brought into focus. Immediately south of the language border a religious literature began to manifest itself from the late twelfth century on, thanks among other things to the agency of Lambert of Theux. The city of Liège was from the outset a player in a wide range of activities in the realm of vernacular religious literature. The northern part of the French-speaking region—comprising approximately the prince bishopric of Liège, Lotharingia, French-speaking Brabant, Hainaut, Artesia, Picardy and French Flanders—constituted an apparent center of gravity for the production and transmission of religious writings in the vernacular.

Because this same area was also the cradle of the Beguine movement, it seems natural to assume a connection between both phenomena. More texts were indeed produced in this region than elsewhere that are associated with the world of the Beguines and the Beghards, such as the *Mirouer des ames simples anienties* by Margaretha Porete or the anonymous *La rigle des fins amans*. But the audience for Old French religious writings was much broader. Michel Zink describes the readers, both male and female, of this plethora of extant thirteenth-century miscellanies with religious contents:

> Ces recueils s'adressent à un public intermédiaire. Un public qui sait lire, mais qui ne sait pas le latin. Un public qui n'appartient entièrement ni au monde clérical ni au monde laïque: béguines, novices ou frères convers, femmes dévotes cherchant à renoncer au monde sans pouvoir ou sans vouloir le quitter.[229]

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[227] On this ms. see Zink 1976, 37–38; cf. Bayot 1929, XX. The 10 Old French Lent sermons were edited by Pasquet 1888.

[228] In this context we would draw attention to the Latin treatises by a certain Gerard of Liège, who may be the same Gerard who was abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Val-Saint-Lambert near Liège from 1249–1254. In especially his *Quinque incitamenta ad Deum amandum ardenter* (ed. Wilmart 1933, 181–247) the Latin is sprinkled with Old French esxpressions that are also common in courtly poetry. Cf. Reynaert 1981, 174–175 and Reynaert 1994, 216 and 218.

[229] Zink 1976, 149–163 (citation on p. 162). Cf. Zink 1977, 69–74, where Zink expresses his suspicion that the 13th-century sermon mss. from Walloon should be situated primarily in Beguine milieus.

> [These miscellanies are aimed at an intermediate audience, an audience that could read, but could not read Latin. This was an audience that did not belong entirely in the clerical world nor in the lay world: Beguines, novices or lay brothers, devout women seeking to renounce the world who did not have the power or desire to leave it.]

Zink is thinking, then, of a very multiform audience, consisting of people who were not uneducated but who however did not know Latin but nevertheless wanted to keep abreast of matters to do with the religious life.

There can hardly be any question of such a large and multiform audience existing on the Dutch-speaking side in the thirteenth century, although there, too, the female religious movement made its mark. The transmission record of medieval literature can lead to significant distortions of historical reality, but cannot completely deceive us in this case. The transmission of thirteenth-century religious literature in Middle Dutch was not even a shadow of what transpired directly on the other side of the border. The *Limburg sermons* undoubtedly formed in part at least the vanguard of a developing Middle Dutch religious literature in this century. That this exhibits overlap with the rich Old French tradition, which had flourished for over a century in the Walloon regions, is hardly surprising. It is rather remarkable that French influence on the *Limburg sermons* is so limited. There are two counterparts in Old French to *Limburg sermons*, both of which achieved significant popularity in the northern part of the French-speaking region. Neither of the two *Limburg sermons* appears, however, to have been translated directly from the Old French. Furthermore, here and there we find points of overlap in motifs and imagery from *minne* mysticism, here, too, in the absence of demonstrable direct connections with texts in Old French. Ultimately the influence of the Old French literary tradition on the *Limburg sermons* was remarkably slight.

4.6 *Mystical Networks*

The *Limburg sermons* comprise a prose collection in which texts and groups of texts have been brought together from all points of the compass. By far the most influential of these was the Middle High German tradition. Not only does the collection contain 35 translated *St. Georgen sermons*, but a translation of *Herr Selbharts Regel*, as well. The neighboring Lower Rhine region, on the other hand, the dialect of

which was closer to Middle Dutch, apparently had no direct influence on the *Limburg sermons*—unless the seven Passion sermons came from there. Amongst the sixteen interpolated *Limburg sermons* there are undoubtedly a number of indigenous Dutch ones. And finally there are two *Limburg sermons* that have counterparts in Old French, but that were not translated directly from the French.

The compiler of the *Limburg sermons*, probably working in Brabant or Maasland, found himself at an intersection of influences and traditions. He was able to gather appropriate materials from a variety of regions and religious movements. He included in his Middle Dutch corpus a number of texts for which Latin, Old French and Middle High German versions were in simultaneous circulation, namely the Palm Tree treatise and the twelve fruits sermon. The thirteenth-century dissemination of these two texts indicates that certain networks were already in existence in the late thirteenth century, via which religious, often mystically oriented texts circulated to oftentimes distant regions. These networks would have consisted in particular of persons or groups sharing a common spirituality, who driven by their religious convictions took great pains to exchange ideas and texts over great distances. Although hardly any religious literature of consequence had established itself in the Netherlands, the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* succeeded in gaining access to one of these networks, which allowed him to import from afar textual material that was apparently unavailable to him in his own region.

The international composition of the *Limburg sermons* fits into a larger context, which spans a much broader portion of Northwest Europe. Friedrich Ohly has demonstrated how the center of gravity of Christian Canticle exegesis came to be situated north of the Alps from the beginning of the twelfth century, in an area that comprised approximately Northern France, the southwestern portion of Germany and the Southern Netherlands, and thus roughly coincides with the catchments of the Seine, Meuse, and Rhine.[230] These regions also comprise the center of the gothic style. It was especially in the twelfth century that the Rhine/Meuse/Seine basin was the cradle of an impressive body of Canticle translations, paraphrases and adaptations, that are often characterized by a high degree of originality and theological innova-

[230] Ohly 1958, 309; cf. the map on pp. 314–315. For a broad survey of the cultural life in especially the Meuse-Rhine area, see *Rhein und Maas* 1972–1973.

tion. A few early exceptions such as the *Sankt Trudperter Hohelied* aside, the Song of Songs began to exert an influence on vernacular religious literature as well from the thirteenth century on. The keen interest in this book of the Bible is organically connected to the numerous mystical movements that gradually began to manifest themselves in this century. For most of these movements the Song of Songs was the spiritual foundation, because it is the one book of the Bible in which the personal bond of Love between God and man is most explicitly celebrated. The keen interest of the compiler and the primary audience of the *Limburg sermons* for the imagery of the *Canticum canticorum* on the one hand, and the immediate encounter with God on the other, places them in this context, as well.

The way in which the *Limburg sermons* were compiled reveals that like-mind people and circles maintained contacts by one means or another. In the large monastic orders, with the central organization, the interchange of people, ideas, texts, or images could in principle take place quite readily. In the Cistercian order, for example, the filiation system, whereby a mother monastery founded as many daughter institutions as it could, produced all kinds of filial relationships between monasteries which must almost as a matter of course led to mutual contacts and meetings. Visitations and chapter meetings, too, ensured a continual traffic between monasteries that belonged to an order. If the *St. Georgen sermons* did indeed originate in the bosom of the Cistercian order, then it seems most likely that the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* acquired the lion's share of his materials via the network of this order, which had manifested itself so forcefully in the Southern Netherlands.

The movements of Beguines, Beghards, anchoresses and semi-religious that also flourished during this period usually lacked a coherent and stable organization that could survive for decades or generations. But in these circles, too, contacts were established over great distances. Johannes von Brünn, for example, traveled at the beginning of the fourteenth century from Brno in what is now the Czech Republic to Cologne, because he had learned that the conditions for Beghard lifestyle were there the most favorable.[231] The most impressive example of the forging of a mystic network, however, is the *Lijst der volmaakten* [List of

[231] We have an inquisition report to thank for this this information on Johannes von Brünn, in which he claims to have met all kind of heretics amongst the Beghards at Cologne. See also Lerner 1972, 106–109 and Senner 1997, 222–223.

the Perfect] which is added to the Visions of Hadewijch. In this spectacular enumeration reference is made to 'perfected ones' in Saxony, in Jerusalem, in Paris, in England, in Cologne and in all manner of other regions—but most of them come from the Netherlands.[232] Even though this *Lijst* exhibits legendary characteristics, its very existence illustrates that Hadewijch and her circle believed they had kindred souls throughout Europe and into the Holy Land. The existence of this idea alone implies all kinds of contacts within the European mystical movement (and beyond?).

Sometimes we are able to a certain degree to bring the contours of these kinds of networks into focus. An intriguing case, for example, are the *Rothschild Canticles*, the splendidly illuminated book of devotions dated to ca. 1300, produced in the Southern Netherlands for a lady with an interest in mysticism (see § 2.3). The manuscript contains a full-page miniature of the *Palma contemplationis*, which is by far the oldest witness to palm tree iconography (fig. 12). In the late thirteenth century, when this miniature was painted, there were already two redactions of the Palm Tree treatise in different languages in circulation: in Old French, Latin, Middle High German and Middle Dutch. The motif of the *Palma contemplationis* was well known in circles with an interest in mysticism at the time. The compilers of the *Rothschild Canticles*, probably from the bishopric of Thérouanne in the Southern Netherlands, will also have been familiar with the text, but the illumination cannot be unambiguously linked to either of the textual redactions. The existence of a more or less independent iconography is an extra indication of the widespread dissemination of the palm tree theme in the French-speaking Low Countries, where almost all of the extant thirteenth-century manuscripts containing *Le palmier* originated.

The example of the palm tree allegory illustrates how texts dealing with the Song of Songs could find an early and wide dissemination within the region of the Seine, Meuse and Rhine. Originating in Northern France, where the text quickly became popular, *Le palmier* spread via a Latin translation to the Middle High German language area, where two adaptations were made. The Middle High German SG redaction was translated, in the thirteenth century still, in turn into Middle Dutch (Ls. 31). The palm tree miniature was painted for the *Rothschild Canticles* in the Southern Netherlands ca. 1300. Probably after

[232] Ed. Dros & Willaert 1996, 150–163; cf. the commentary on pp. 207–213.

the turn of the century a direct translation of *Le palmier* into Middle Dutch was produced. It is assumed that this Old French redaction E also influenced the *Rheinische Marienlob*, because in this Ripuarian work a tree is described in which seven doves sing the virtues of Mary, flowers grow in the grass that symbolize her virtues.[233] Upon closer inspection it appears that direct borrowing is out of the question, but from the appearance of texts such as the *Marienlob* and *Die Lilie* it would appear that religious tree and bird allegories were popular in the thirteenth-century Lower Rhine region, too.

Jeffrey Hamburger called attention to the cosmopolitan nature of the *Rothschild Canticles* manuscript: the style of illumination is unmistakably Northern French/Flemish (bishopric Thérouanne) and the script, too, points in the direction of the Southern Netherlands, but in some miniatures motifs have been incorporated that first appear in Middle High German literature. This is true, for example, for the origin of the monstrous races of men. Their advent may be attributed to the disobedient daughters of Adam, who ate certain forbidden herbs and subsequently gave birth to monsters. This fact appears for the first time in German texts of the twelfth century, such as the *Wiener Genesis* (1160–1170). The motif later spread to the Southern Netherlands, although it is not clear how. There must have been all kinds of connections along which these kinds of motifs could have spread.[234]

> An interesting case, which would appear to belong to the same context, is the cycle of Canticle frescoes that were painted around the middle of the fourteenth century in the Cistercian abbey at Chelmno (Kulm) in Polen. Its iconographical program is very similar to that of the blockbook *Canticum canticorum*, which was printed around the year 1465 (fig. 22).[235] There are two editions of this blockbook, whereby the first is preserved in two versions. The second version of the first edition contains on the first page a Middle Dutch inscription *Dit is die voersienicheit van Marien der moder Godes ende is geheten in Latijn Cantice* [This is the providence of Mary, Mother of God and is called *Cantice* in Latin]. This version of the blockbook is usually situated in the Southern Netherlands. Both the second version and the second edition of the blockbook are in all likelihood German

[233] Cf. Fleischer 1976, 108–115. Seidel 2003, 218–219 dismisses Fleischer's suggestion on legitimate grounds.

[234] See Hamburger 1990, 35–42, 99–100 and 211–212, and Scheepsma 2001a, 286–293 for this and a few other cases of MHG literary influence on the *Rothschild Canticles*.

[235] For this case, see Bartal 2000, with numerous illustrations; see also Hamburger 1990, Fig. 154–163.

Fig. 22. Blockbook *Cantica canticorum* etc. The Bed of Love (reproduced after Delen & Meertens 1949).

in origin.[236] It is rather unlikely that the blockbook *Canticum canticorum* is based directly on the frescoes at Chelmno, or vice versa. We should rather assume a common source, and given the origin of at least one version of the first edition of the blockbook, it could well be of Dutch origin. That a very early iconographical tradition existed there is proven by the *Rothschild Canticles*, for they contain the oldest known cycle of miniatures relating to the Song of Songs.[237] The *Limburg sermons* that deal with the orchard of Love and the spiritual wine cellar (see § 3.4) confirm that there was already an interest in this theme in the Netherlands before 1300. The question remains whether a potentially Dutch Canticle iconography could have penetrated as far east as Chelmno in the middle of the fourteenth century, but in the context of the far-flung Cistercian, this does not seem impossible. Nor is it impossible that we are dealing here with a program originating in Eastern or Middle Europe and radiating out toward the West.

Shortly after it was created, a brief notation in Middle Dutch was added on an empty leaf of the manuscript containing the *Rothschild Canticles*. The dialect is situated in the vicinity of the Lower Rhine.[238] It is a quotation from *De mystica theologia* by Dionysius the Areopagite, cited after Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*. This is the first witness to the reception of in Middle Dutch (see § 4.1). This deliberate citation must have been drawn from a Middle High German exemplar, but it is not known precisely which one. Dionysius was studied intensely at the end of the thirteenth century in Dominican circles associated with Meister Eckhart, who was living in Erfurt at the time. The famous master later joined the *studium generale* of the Dominicans at Cologne. The owner of the *Rothschild Canticles* who added the Dionysius citation, must have been familiar with the Dominican mystical literature of his day. The inclusion of this openly mystical citation once bears witness to a speedy German/Dutch exchange of a text that is part of the foundation of the Western mystical tradition.

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[236] A facsimile of the Dutch version of the 1st edition is provided e.g. by Delen & Meertens 1949; on the Dutch blockbook see also Schepers 1999, vol. 1, 35–36, who does not, however, deal with the iconographical backgrounds. See Palmer 1995, 146–152 and Palmer 2005, 18–20 (BB-7) for more information on the blockbook *Canticum canticorum*.

[237] Cf. Hamburger 1990, 70–87 (pp. 85–87 discuss the connection with Chelmno). The resemblance to the blockbook *Canticum canticorum* remained unknown to Hamburger.

[238] Ed. Hamburger 1990, 214 (Fig. 91 is a plate of this fragment) and Scheepsma 2001a, 282. On the possible origin of these texts see Hamburger 1990, 122–123 and Scheepsma 2001a, 281–286.

The cosmopolitan character of the *Rothschild Canticles* appears to be representative of the mystic culture in the Meuse/Rhine/Seine basin in the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Despite the significant linguistic, cultural, spiritual and all manner of local variations that undoubtedly must have existed, the fascination with a lifestyle in which the personal encounter with God played a central role provided time and again the motivation to ignore these differences and establish contacts. The composition of the *Limburg sermons* and the *Rothschild Canticles*, to mention just two important cases, proves that the Low Countries had acquired a place in such mystical networks in the last decades of the thirteenth century.

I shall now attempt to bring into sharper focus the international backgrounds from which the *Limburg sermons* originated. We begin this exploration in the French-speaking Low Countries, which border the area in which the *Limburg sermons* originated to the south. It should be observed at the outset that the language border in the Middle Ages constituted a much less sharply defined barrier than is the case in modern Belgium. Both languages were spoken on either side of the border, albeit in difference ratios.[239] North of the language boundary the predominant language was Dutch, but fairly large French-speaking communities lived in many of the cities, whereas Dutch-speaking constituencies were present in many places in the Walloon region, as well. As a rule throughout the area the higher social circles spoke French; it goes without saying that the cultural orientation in this region was toward France. In this bilingual situation one would expect all kinds of interactions between Old French and Middle Dutch. This was certainly the case for courtly romance of the period, but how does the religious literature compare in this regard?

Old French literature boasts hundreds of sermons dating to the period before 1300, the transmission of a substantial portion of which can be situated in the French-speaking Low Countries and Northern France. Against this background it is especially astonishing that the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* adopted such a strong orientation toward Middle High German literature. He had only to travel a few dozen kilometers to the south, as it were, and with a little bit of effort and the right contacts he could have harvested a goodly body of religious literature.

[239] Simons 2001, 3–4. For the backgrounds see also Quak & Van der Horst 2002, especially 20–21.

But he did not do that. The language boundary would seem to have operated in this instance as a cultural barrier, instead.[240]

The female religious movement in the bishopric of Liège and the Duchy of Brabant also manifested itself on the Dutch side of the border. Here, too, in the smallest of towns Beguines and Beghards were active, dozens of female monasteries were founded, predominantly of the Cistercian order, and numerous women practiced mystical spirituality. Various *mulieres religiosae* crossed the language border during their lifetimes, and the sources do not give the impression that the language differences led to any real problems. The Dutch-speaking Beatrice of Nazareth, for example, came from Tienen in Brabant, not far from the language boundary. After having been educated by the Beguines in Zoutleeuw, she entered the Cistercian convent of Bloemendaal in Eerken. When Beatrice had subsequently excelled in the arts of writing and illumination, she moved to La Ramée. This abbey was founded, it is true, in the Dutch-speaking part of Brabant, near Kerkom, but ca. 1215 it was moved to Jauchelette in Walloon-Brabant. This did not mean the end of Dutch as the everyday language: Ida of Gorsleeuw composed here a number of lines in Middle Dutch (see § 1.5). At La Ramée Beatrice forged a friendship with Ida of Nivelles, who spoke French. Ida had already entered the monastery, however, when it was located in Kerkom and the everyday language was apparently Dutch. As her *vita* tells us, this Walloon nun initially had great difficulty with Dutch, but gradually managed to pick up enough of the language.[241] If we are to believe the *Vita Beatricis*, the difference in mother tongue did

[240] This would appear not to be an isolated phenomenon. Sleiderink 2003, 169 notes that over the centuries at the multilingual Brabantine court there was hardly any intertextuality between the literature produced for the dukes in French and Dutch.

[241] All of ch. II of the *Vita B. Idae de Nivelles* deals with this issue. I quote two passages from the beginning and the end: *In hoc ergo monasterio* [i.e. Kerkom] *cum esset venerabilis Ida, audiebat sorores barbara quadam & ignota sibi verba loquentes, nec intelligebat linguam eam eo quod omnes fere lingua Theutonica loquerentur. Et quamuis linguam Theutonicam nesciret, tamen cum interdum audiebat virum religiosum lingua Theutonica praedicantem verbum Dei fiante Spiritu Sancto interius in anima eius, fluebat ab oculis suis lachrymæ, nec poterat se continere, quoniam magna cordis suauitate tenebatur*. […] *Si quando, videbat aliquam sororum suarum solito tristiorem, quamuis ei loqui Theutonice nesciret, tamen residebat iuxta eam, & obnubilitationem faciei eius, exteriori saltem serenabat hilaritate, Religiosi siquidem & non religiosi tam viri quam mulieres venientes ad videndum ipsam, ex honestis eius moribus & ex abundantia gratiæ quam in ea esse credebant, consolationem magnam reportabant. Ipsa autem paulatim didicit linguam Theutonicam, vt tam sororibus suis quam eiusdem linguae gentibus congrue loqueretur* (Henriquez 1630, 205–206 and 207–208). My thanks to Jeroen Deploige and Katrien Heene (Ghent).

nothing to hinder the intense friendship between Ida and Beatrice.[242] It must be observed, however, that it is still unclear what role Latin as an everyday language may have played in these kinds of integrated female monasteries.

Opposed to the multilingual situation in La Ramée there is the legendary anecdote about Lutgard of Tongeren, who was incapable of learning French. Around 1216 she left the Benedictine abbey of Mielen near Sint-Truiden for the zealous Cistercian community of nuns at Aywières (Aquiria). Founded in present-day Aiwirs, southwest of Liège, this monastery was moved in 1215 to French-speaking Brabant, in the immediate vicinity of the abbey of Villers (whereby it retained the old name of Aywières). According to the *Vita Lutgardis* by Thomas of Cantimpré, in thirty years at this monastery Lutgard did not learn enough Walloon to ask for a crust of bread.[243] (Lutgard has this apparent lack of linguistic talent to thank for her status as the patron saint of Flanders.) Thomas interpreted this unusual shortcoming as a blessing from Mary, who in this way shielded Lutgard from the responsibilities of the office of abbess, which she otherwise would certainly have been compelled to accept. This anecdote illustrates just how unusual it was in a South Netherlandish context for a Dutch speaker not to be able to learn French after some exposure to it.

If people within the religious movement of the thirteenth century easily crossed the language frontier, did the same also hold true for texts? If Dutch-speaking nuns learned to speak French, then there must have been some who could read French, as well. But indications for the penetration of Old French writings into the Dutch-speaking sphere are extremely rare. The Liège psalter The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 76 G 17 (ca. 1300–1310) contains some Old French, whereas in all probability this codex was used in a Dutch context. The calendar contains various inscriptions, rubrics, prologues and prayers in Old French (fig. 23).[244] Nevertheless, Oliver has made a compelling case that this psalter was owned by an inhabitant of the Beguinage St. Agnes in Maaseik (a precursor to the later regular monastery, that was dedicated to the same saint). For in the calendar we find both Agnes, the patron

[242] See Reypens 1964, 41–49 (cha. 49–59); cf. Vekeman 1993, 54–62.

[243] *AASS* Jun. III (16 June), 243; cf. *Corpus Gysseling* II–5, 9:197–16:492.

[244] On ms. Harley 2930 see § 4.5; Simons 1991, 28 has cast doubt upon the localisation of this ms. to Maaseik, following which Oliver 1992, 253–254 once again defended her position.

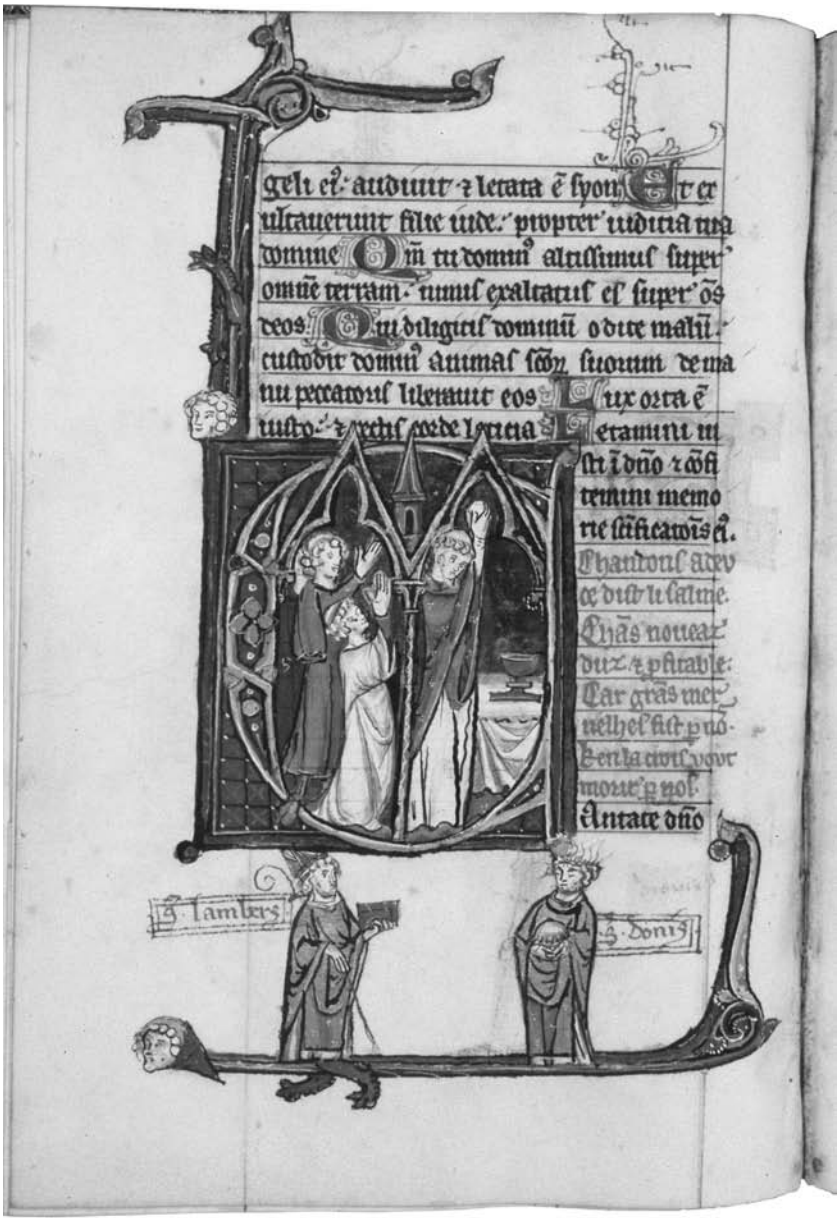

Fig. 23. MS The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 76 G 17, f. 82v. A page from the Liège Beguine psalter from St. Agnes at Maaseik, with rubrics in Old French.

saint of the Beguinage in Maaseik, and Harlindis, who was the subject of special veneration in Maaseik. Apparently the Old French inscriptions posed no problems for the presumably Dutch-speaking first user of the manuscript.

Now in this psalter from Maaseik we are not dealing with serious religious works, but rather short to ultra-short texts. Other examples of thirteenth-century Dutch-speaking religious who knew of or could read French religious works are unknown to me—but who knows what will turn up in this largely uncultivated field. It is nevertheless telling that both texts from the *Limburg sermons* collection that have an Old French counterpart were not based on the French version. Ls. 40 is based on the original Latin sermon by Guiard of Laon, while Ls. 31 made a long detour via the Middle High German SG redaction. The connection between the *Limburg sermons* and Old French religious literature is anything but strong, even though, as the reference in Ls. 46 to Walloon texts demonstrates, very much aware of its existence. The similarities that some of the *Limburg sermons* nevertheless exhibit with certain Old French works are derived rather from a common interest in certain themes and motifs, especially those drawn from the world of mystical *minne*, than from direct borrowing. Later then, via a different route, the fourteenth-century Middle Dutch translation of *Le palmier* was composed, which as far as I am aware was the first Middle Dutch translation of an Old French religious text.

There is also an example of a Liège psalter containing Old French texts that was used in the Ripuarian language area, namely Harley 2930, mentioned earlier. In addition to the psalter in Latin, this ms. contains as well a French translation of the Hours of the Cross and *Des XII preus* by Guiard of Laon (see § 4.5). The manuscript was produced ca. 1280 in a Brabantine workshop, as witnessed by the calendar for an owner from the bishopric of Huy. Not much later the manuscript was used in the vicinity of Cologne, for an early fourteenth-century hand has added a considerable number of annotations in Ripuarian to the calendar and psalter text. Later these annotations were erased, all, that is, except for inscription that was overlooked, which could well indicate that the manuscript had once again (?) come into the hands of someone outside the Ripuarian language area.[245] The case of Harley

[245] Cf. Oliver 1988, vol. 2, 268; the only surviving Ripuarian inscription, on f. 58 reads: *Dez salm la dir wezzan hep wan er ist den sunderen gut* [Let this psalm be your hope, for it is good for sinners].

2930 shows firstly that the Liège psalters enjoyed a fairly widespread dissemination that included the Lower Rhine region. As was the case in Maaseik, the presence of Old French here does not seem to have posed a problem—though we do not know, of course, whether they were actually read. The Ripuarian annotations in Harley 2930, however, were sufficiently disturbing to a later owner that he/she wanted them removed.

Via this extraordinary Liège psalter we arrive at the region of the Lower Rhine, which forms the eastern flank of the area where the *Limburg sermons* were translated, written or collected. In this region a considerable number of texts were composed that at the very least in terms of contents exhibit a certain affinity with the Middle Dutch sermon corpus: *Die Lilie* and the *Buch der Minne*, the *Rheinische Marienlob* and the four allegorical poems (see § 1.4). Especially the *Buch der Minne* shows close affinities at times to the *Limburg sermons* in terms of its themes and attitude, although the author seems on the whole to have adopted a frequently somewhat more 'modern' position. That this text became available in the thirteenth century in a Middle Dutch translation points to contacts between the area of the Lower Rhine and the Netherlands. The central position occupied by the city of Cologne in commerce in the Rhineland at the time could here have played a role. But despite the flourishing of Lower Rhenish religious literature there is nothing that would indicate the existence of contacts between the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* and this region—unless the seven Passion sermons have their roots in the Lower Rhine.

In the Ripuarian language area there undoubtedly existed a breeding ground for vernacular religious literature in the thirteenth century.[246] Given that the city of Cologne was inhabited by hundreds of Beguines, among whom one could expect to find a great appetite for vernacular religious literature, they would appear to have been the intended readers of such works as the *Rheinische Marienlob* or the *Buch der Minne*. But in practice it is extremely difficult to determine who the audience was for the Lower Rhenish religious literature, although it is certain that these texts were written largely for women. Typical Beguine texts, like the Old French texts of Margaretha Porete, among others, or possibly the works of Hadewijch, were not demonstrably present in the Beguine center of Cologne and its vicinity. Nor is the bishopric of

[246] The religious history of Cologne in the late Middle Ages is described in Janssen 1995.

Cologne very well endowed when it comes to female *vitae*. Apart from the unfinished *vita* of Christina von Stommeln (1242–1312) written by the Dominican Peter von Dacia (†1288), no texts are known that show any resemblance to the lives of the *mulieres religiosae* from Liège/Brabant (see § 1.5).[247] And yet there would appear to be a natural connection between the Lower Rhine area and the neighboring Netherlands. Thus Volker Honemann situates both the *Rheinische Marienlob* and the *Buch der Minne* in a Lower Rhine/Netherlandish religious context, the most pregnant expression of which are in his view the writings of Beatrice of Nazareth and Hadewijch.[248]

Despite this apparent affinity, the *Limburg sermons* exhibit the strongest ties not with the Lower Rhine area or the Walloon and Northern French regions, but rather with the far-off High German-speaking Rhineland. There, in the vicinity of the Black Forest, lies the cradle of the *St. Georgen sermons* and *Herr Selbharts Regel* is probably also from this region. According to an older view the *St. Georgen sermons* had over the years gradually traveled down the Rhine, as it were, but that theory loses validity based on the dating of manuscript H alone.[249] It seems reasonable to suppose that in the last quarter of the thirteenth century a nearly complete manuscript of the Middle High German sermons was brought to the Netherlands in one piece and translated. The other way round is also a possibility: a 'Netherlander' could have traveled to the Alemannic language region and there set about making a translation of the Middle High German sermons. In both cases we must assume direct contact between the supplier of the source texts and the translator of *Limburg sermons* with his great interest in monastically-oriented religious prose. Such direct contact with the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* is not to be found for the Ripuarian or Walloon/Northern French language areas.

This exchange of religious texts between the Low Countries and the Middle High German language area fits into a pattern that crystallized out in the course of the Late Middle Ages. It is especially Kurt Ruh who has drawn attention to this intriguing process of literary exchange. In his view the High German, Low German, and Dutch religious litera-

[247] On Christina von Stommeln see Ruh 1990–1999, vol. 2, 116–120.
[248] Honemann 1992, 36 and Honemann 1989, 1064–1065, respectively.
[249] Cf. e.g. Fleischer 1976, 162.

tures constitute a coherent entity.[250] This emerges from the continuous interaction that, in constantly changing proportions, took place especially during the late Middle Ages. The division that now exists between the fixed written languages of German and Dutch and that coincides with modern national boundaries did not exist in the Middle Ages. Dialects flowed gradually from one to another, as it were, from the North Sea to the Alps. For literary exchange between neighboring regions real translations were not necessary: a more or less literal 'Umschreibung' [transliteration] from one dialect to the next was sufficient, whereby syntax and lexicon were retain as much as possible and only phonetics and form were adapted to the chosen target dialect.

Although people in the German-speaking areas were aware that they spoke related languages, there nevertheless seems at least to have been a pronounced sense of difference between the *Oberlant* and the *Niderlant*. In his sermon on the dissimilarities between the *Oberlant* and the *Niderlant*, Berthold von Regensburg remarks upon this distinction—whereby in his view the *Niderlant* represents the depths of Hell with all of its evil:

> Ir wizzet wol, daz die Niderlender unde die Oberlender gar ungelîch sint an der sprâche und an den siten. Die von Oberlant, dort her von Zürich, die redent vil anders danne die von Niderlande, von Sahsen die sint ungelîch an der sprâche.[251]
>
> [You know full well that the *Niderlender* and the *Oberlender* are entirely different in terms of language and customs. Those from the *Oberlant*, from hither to Zürich, speak entirely differently than those from the *Niderlant*, from Saxony, and they are dissimilar in their speech.]

Thus the *Niderlant* includes not just the contemporary Dutch-speaking area, but also those regions where Low Saxon and Middle Frankish were spoken. Into the latter dialect family fall among others Ripuarian (in the vicinity of Cologne) and Moselle Frankish (near Trier). We may deduce from Berthold's account that within the *Niderlant* (where today Dutch and originally Low German are spoken) on the one hand and the *Oberlant* (where High German is the everyday language) on the other, these dialects were mutually comprehensible. By means of

[250] First steps toward this view are found in in Ruh 1956, 92, Ruh 1956–1957, 136 and the introduction to Ruh 1964, XI (the title of which *Altdeutsche und altniederländische Mystik* speaks volumes); a systematic development of the theory is provided by Ruh 1984b (which first appeared in 1964).

[251] Ed. Pfeiffer & Strobl 1862–1880, vol. 1, 250:38–251:2 (sermon XVIII).

'Umschreibungen' texts could be disseminated fairly widely within both regions. In order to render texts from the *Niderlant* comprehensible in the *Oberlant*, or vice versa, translations were necessary. And these were produced on a large scale, especially in the religious/mystical sphere, but also in the area of didactic texts.[252]

Initially the flow of translations of religious literature between the Low Countries and the *Oberlant* ran primarily from southeast to northwest. Contrary to what Ruh thought, that process had begun already in the late thirteenth. That was, after all, when the *Limburg sermons* were compiled, and more or less at the same time as the *Boec der minnen*. The 35 translated *St. Georgen sermons* that are contained in the *Limburg sermons* constitute the oldest known but simultaneously most compelling exponent of a cultural current that flowed southeast to northwest and breached the barrier between the *Oberlant* and *Niderlant*. That was a hurdle that the *Boec der minnen*, a faithful translation of the *Buch der Minne*, did not have to take, given that the Ripuarian base text belonged to the *Niderlant*.[253] Here the current flowed more from east to west, over a much shorter distance.

Nevertheless, there are also signs at the end of the thirteenth century of a movement in the opposite direction. A manuscript from ca. 1300 contains a gospel harmony written in a strange hybrid of Middle Dutch and Alemannic.[254] The text is based on the Middle Dutch diatessaron, of which the *Luikse Leven van Jezus* is the oldest witness.[255] Although the manuscript does not bear an owner's mark, it seems likely that it comes from the Dominican monastery of Ötenbach in Zürich.[256] Based on linguistic evidence, the author who translated the Middle Dutch gospel text into German came from Cologne or its environs.

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[252] For the differences between *Oberlant* and *Niderlant* and the implications for German and Dutch literary history, see Ruh 1984b, 95–102, Williams-Krapp 1986 and Williams-Krapp 2003. On the terminology, see De Vreese 1909, in this context especially pp. 445–448.

[253] On the translation see Willeumier-Schalij 1946, LXXVIII–CVII. To what extent this may not indeed be no more than an 'Umschreibung' as Ruh's defines it has yet to be studied.

[254] Ms. Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, C 170; ed. Gerhardt 1970.

[255] De Bruin 1935, vol. 1, 214–218.

[256] Ms. Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, C 170 is contained in the same volume bound by pink leather as mss. C 172 and C 174 from the same collection. Both of these volumes may be linked with the Dominican monastery Ötenbach in Zürich (cf. Mohlberg 1952, no. 193 (p. 365)). The history of Ötenbach, that goes back to 1231, is provided by Zimmer & Degler-Spengler 1999, vol. 2, 1019–1053; cf. vol. 1, 466–501.

Given the appearance of the text in circles of Swiss Dominicans, it seems reasonable to suppose that the translator was a member of that order. That assumption is compatible with a localization in Cologne, where the Dominicans had established their *studium generale* since 1248, and which had grown into an intellectual center of import.[257] Thus the gospel harmony from the *Niderlant* made the early transition to the High German language area possibly through the agency of the Dominican preachers.

In the event that the seven Passion sermons Ls. 32–38 are indeed authentically Dutch, or possibly originated in the Lower Rhine area, then manuscript F constitutes a second indication for a southeasterly flow of religious prose. The seven texts were after all compiled in the collection *Von unsers herre geburte*, in a Rhine Frankish dialect that belongs in the *Oberlant*. Given the fact that the manuscript from Fulda is dated to the first half of the fourteenth century, the transition of the seven Passion sermons to the *Oberlant* took place certainly before 1350. Under which circumstances this textual transmission transpired remains uncertain, although it is striking that manuscript F contains a substantial series of *St. Georgen sermons*, albeit not in the y2 redaction.[258]

As the fourteenth century wore on, the exchange between Middle Dutch Middle High German mystical literature became more balanced. Around 1350 a literary exchange took place that is well documented, for at that time Jan van Ruusbroec sent a copy of his main work *Die gheestelike brulocht* [The Spiritual Espousals] to 'Gottesfreunde' [Friends of God] in the Upper Rhine region. The prologue to *Das buoch von den fúrkomenen gnoden und von der verdienlichen gnoden* [The book of prevenient grace and of the grace by which one merits eternal life] by Rulman Merswin (1307–1382) makes explicit mention of this dispatch.[259] The former banker Merswin played a central role after the middle of the century in the Friends of God movement, which had its roots primarily at Strasbourg and Basel. It is difficult to form a clear picture of the Friends of God, however, if only because there is a tremendous amount of mystification propagated in the texts and manuscripts they

[257] Cf. Maurer 1929, especially 62–64 and 68–71 and Gerhardt 1970, XXI, who do not include the volumes from Ötenbach in their discussion.

[258] A survey of German-Dutch exchange in the field of sermon literature is provided by Mertens & Scheepsma 2003.

[259] See the citation in Mertens 1997, 111–112.

left behind.[260] The Dominican Johannes Tauler (†1361) and the secular priest Heinrich von Nördlingen served as pastoral guide for Merswin and oversaw his conversion. Later on Merswin bought an abandoned monastery in Strasbourg, the Grünenwörth, and practiced, together with a number of followers, a form of mystical/ascetic spirituality there. In all likelihood Tauler visited Ruusbroec in his recently founded monastery Groenendaal in the Sonian Forest. Ruusbroec's circle was, both spiritually and socially, no less elite than that of the 'Gottesfreunde', although the core of the community at Groenendaal consisted mainly of wealthy religious. In addition to Ruusbroec these included his uncle Jan Hinckaert and Frank van den Coudenberg, all three of whom came from the best families in Brussels. The religious community in Brabant succeeded, by means visits and dispatches, in maintaining contacts with like-minded groups in Basel and Strasbourg.[261]

> The report of Tauler's visit to Groenendaal in *De origine Viridisvallis* by Henricus Pomerius is rarely taken seriously in Germanic studies.[262] Only Kurt Ruh has been willing to ascribe any value to this statement.[263] In the past few years, however, a numerous pieces of evidence have been brought forth in Netherlandic studies that confirm that Tauler did indeed visit the Sonian Forest. Geert Warnar has recently argued that the meeting with Ruusbroec left traces in the *Meisterbuch*, a text that tells the story of Tauler's conversion in veiled terms.[264] Thom Mertens had previously shown that several of Ruusbroec's works had enjoyed a speedy dissemination among the circles of the Friends of God.[265] Tauler's functioning as an intermediary would provide an excellent historical explanation for this swift dissemination. Although Tauler usually dwelled in Strasbourg, he is said to have visited Cologne in 1339 and 1346, where he preached.[266] From there he could fairly easily have made the trip to Brussels. The question

[260] A picture of this circle is formed by among others Weitlauff 1981, Steer 1987b and especially Gorceix 1984. In 2007 the international collaborative project, 'Friends of God. Religious elites in the Rhineland and the Low Countries and their literature' was begun under the direction of Hans-Jochen Schiewer (Freiburg i. Br.), Wybren Scheepsma and Geert Warnar (Leiden), which in the very near future will publish a volume of essays on this phenomenon.

[261] On Ruusbroec's immediate circle and their relationship to the Friends of God, see Mertens 1997, Warnar 2003a, 134–138 and Scheepsma 2007, 268–272.

[262] Cf. e.g. Gnädinger 1993, 71–73.

[263] Ruh 1984b, 104.

[264] Warnar 2003b.

[265] Mertens 1997.

[266] For more on the journeys to Cologne, see Gnädinger 1993, 36–37 and 41–42. In between visits Tauler lived in exile in Basel.

> remains, however, why there are hardly any traces of the reception of Tauler's work in Ruusbroec's circle.[267]

Another indication of literary exchange in this period are the traces of Middle High German interventions in a pair of Rooklooster manuscripts, i.e. in Brussels 3067–73 (Vv) and in Mazarine 920 (see § 4.1). Especially the latter codex, to which a few texts in a West Alemannic dialect were added (and thus could have been written in Basel or Strasbourg), is an important witness. Around the middle of the fourteenth century there circulated codices of the Middle Dutch writings of Jan van Ruusbroec and others on the Upper Rhine, at any rate amongst the circles of the Friends of God. The penetration of a few of Hadewijch's work in Middle High German can also be attributed to this mid-fourteenth-century exchange between Brabant and the Upper Rhine.[268] According to an inscription Berlin mgo 12 (see § 4.2), which serves as an announcement of the works of Adelwip in this manuscript from the second half of the fourteenth century, there were Friends of God in Brabant whose history went back a century: *Von der lere sunderlich alle gottes frunde in Brabant von hundert jaren zuo dem aller vollekommenesten lebende komen sint unde von der gnaden gottes durch su erlúthtet*. [It is especially because of this teaching that all of the Friends of God in Brabant have been achieving the highest degree of living for a hundred years, and thanks to this teaching have been enlightened by the grace of God].[269] It may well be that for just as long contacts had existed between like-minded groups in both regions. The reference by Lamprecht von Regensburg in his *Tochter Syon*, written ca. 1250, to *mulieres religiosae* from Brabant and his own Bavarian region gives one reason to suspect as much (see § 1.5).

The symbiotic relationship between the *Oberlant* and the *Niderlant* in the field of religious literature demands further explanation. Both regions bordered directly on the French-speaking area, which was the absolute trend-setter when it came to vernacular literature. Both German and Dutch epic literature of the Middle Ages was very much indebted to Old French romance literature. Here the language boundary was anything but a watershed. Why, then, had a barrier

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[267] Cf. Mertens & Scheepsma 2003.

[268] Scheepsma 2000, 663–665.

[269] Van Mierlo 1947, vol. 1, 266; for Van Mierlo's interpretation see p. 265, but also see Scheepsma 2000, 678.

been erected with the religious traditions, while on both sides of that barrier a religious tradition was unfolding that was apparently driven by an identical ideal? Frits van Oostrom suspects that it was especially the fear of theological misunderstanding that prevented the Germanic world from translating works from Old French on a large scale.[270] It was not simply much easier to translate from German or Dutch than it was from French, but there was also much less danger that one would misunderstand certain theological subtleties. In a period in which the Inquisition was constantly on the look-out for heresies, it was wise to run as few risks as possible. This must undoubtedly be a part of the explanation for the strong ties between Dutch and German religious literature. But Ruh's notions about the organic entity comprised by the 'German' and 'Dutch' tradition also deserve consideration. The reciprocal orientation of religious circles in the *Oberlant* and the *Niderlant* will at least in part also have been inspired by the recognition of a kindred spiritual attitude, however difficult it may be to define such a concept. It is probable that when it came to piety, their experiences were clearly different to what was common in the Romance world.

We may assume that the compiler of the *Limburg sermons* did indeed detect a similar attitude in the *St. Georgen sermons*, for otherwise he would not have translated and adapted so many of them. As to the means whereby he came into contact with this Middle High German collection of sermons, we can only guess. Ultimately the most likely scenario is an exchange via the channels of the Cistercian order, given its dominant presence in especially the Southern Netherlands. But all manner of other possibilities remain open. Around the middle of the thirteenth century the Franciscan Lamprecht von Regensburg was aware of the religious life of the *mulieres religiosae* in Brabant and Liège, ca. 1300 the Dominicans were probably involved in the translation of the Middle Dutch gospel harmony and a few decades later the Dominican Johannes Tauler visited Groenendaal and the canon regular Jan van Ruusbroec sent his *magnum opus* to the Friends of God on the Upper Rhine. It goes without saying that these historically documented cases constitute only the tip of the iceberg, for a great deal more literary

[270] Van Oostrom 2001, 28. See also Van Oostrom 2006, especially pp. 456–461 where he develops the idea that Dutch (and the closely related German) became such an important tool for mystic and religious literature, due on the one hand to a lack of a powerful central authority in the Low Countries, and to a relative unfamiliarity on the part of authorities with this language (French), on the other.

exchange must have taken place. How else could, for example, manuscript F, which belongs to a different branch of the *St. Georgen sermons* tradition, contain a compilation of the seven Passion sermons, and how else did the then owner of the *Rothschild Canticles* ca. 1300 come by the Middle High German source for that Dionysius quotation?

Somewhere toward the beginning of this wide stream of contacts between like-minded religious in the *Oberlant* and the *Niderlant* is where we should imagine the anonymous compiler of the *Limburg sermons* to be. Given the strong monastic bent of a number of texts one might be inclined to place him in one of the monastic orders, preferably in one of the contemplative ones, such as the Cistercians. It is almost a certainty that the *Limburg sermons* and their spiritual father are to geographically to be located between Brussels and Maastricht, the region where Dutch literature begins.[271] But the 'international' orientation of the oldest Middle Dutch sermon collection may not be underestimated. If the unknown compiler had not belonged to a network that spanned a large part of Europe, then the *Limburg sermons* could never have been written.

[271] See Goossens 1982 and Goossens 1995. Goossens constructs here a picture of the oldest MDu. literature based on the *Corpus Gysseling* and concludes that the earliest tradition at least points to the southeast. The religious prose is for the most part absetn from the *Corpus Gysseling* (see § 1.1), but its transmission, which includes among other things manuscript H and the *Luikse Leven van Jezus*, fits well into the pattern outlined by Goossens. See now also Van Oostrom 2006, p. 118 and *passim* for the Maasland as the cradle of (religious) literature in the Low Countries.

APPENDIX I

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF MANUSCRIPT H

by Erik Kwakkel

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, ms. 70 E 5

Limburg sermons • *Maastricht (ripuarian) Passion play*

Parchment • 247 fols. • 260 × 185 mm • origin unknown • ca. 1300 and 1300–1325

Genesis

Bearing shelfmark 70 E 5 in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague, this manuscript constitutes one of the earliest extant collections of Middle Dutch prose. Although for the most part the manuscript consists of regular quires, of six bifolia each, this apparent transparency is not reflected in the genesis of the codex, which is difficult to reconstruct. The sting is in the tail, namely at the point where the transcription of the *Limburg sermons* (ff. 1r–232v)—dated to ca. 1300—ends, and that of the *Maastricht Passion play* (ff. 233v–247v)—which appears to be younger and may be dated to the period 1300–1325—begins. Codicologists disagree on how these texts relate physically to one another: the question is whether the transcriptions are to be distinguished from one another and thus regarded as two independent codicological entities, or as constituting a single material entity. This question has a bearing both on the relationship between the *Limburg sermons* and the *Passion play*, and on the localization of the former text.

In his much-praised exhibition catalogue, J. Deschamps concludes that ms. 70 E 5 consists of two parts that were bound together at a later stage (Deschamps 1972, 258). From this point of view it remains unclear how the two transcriptions related to one another in the production phase: the scribe of the *Passion play* could have been working in the general or even direct vicinity of the person who copied the sermons,

but he could just as easily have wielded his pen in an entirely different location. Deschamps' theory has in the meantime been superseded. J.P. Gumbert, who subjected ms. 70 E 5 to a thorough study, has argued convincingly that there never was a real codicological gap between the two literary texts in the codex: based on the observation that the pricking of the *Limburg sermons* corresponds to that of the first four folios of the *Passion play* (ff. 233–236), he concluded that the latter text was begun on parchment prepared by the scribe of the sermons (Gumbert 1987, 169 n. 11).

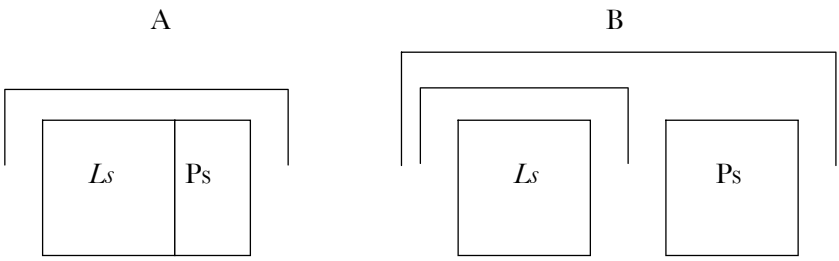
Gumbert does not clarify precisely what he means by 'the same pricking', but we may assume that he means the shape of the holes, which exhibit remarkable differences: ff. 1–236 were pricked with a circular object (the holes are small and round), while ff. 237–246 seem to have been pricked with a knife (the holes are bigger and gash-like)—the holes on f. 247 are both round and large and appear to constitute a third category. In sum, the transcription of the *Passion play* does indeed appear to have been begun on pages of parchment prepared for ruling by the scribe of the *Limburg sermons*. It is likely that these blank folios were already in place when the scribe completed his work (see also below). Judging by the difference in ruling, also remarked upon by Gumbert—the *Passion play* was lined in ink, the *Limburg sermons* in plummet—we may assume that the scribe who copied the sermons had pricked the folios in question, but did not line them.

Although the relationship between the sermons and the *Passion play* rests on modest evidence—the only real proof is those tiny holes in the parchment—the difference in shape of the pricking holes is so obvious that, barring any arguments against it, Gumbert's hypothesis deserves support. In other words, we could regard manuscript H as an 'extended production unit' (situation A in the figure below). That is to say: blank folios at the end of an originally completed production unit were at a later stage filled with text by a second hand, whereby moreover the latter added further folios which he himself had prepared in order to be able to complete his work (for more on this kind of book, see Kwakkel 2002a, 5 and Kwakkel 2002b, 14). This conclusion should be accompanied by the following caveat, however: the reconstruction of the genesis of H is rendered problematic by the fact that at least one quire is missing after f. 232, i.e. precisely at the point in its current state where the transition to the second text takes place. This means that we

have no way of ascertaining how many blank folios originally existed following the *Limburg sermons*: it is possible that there were only a few, but it could well have been an entire quire (as, for example, is the case with the Middle Dutch manuscripts Vienna, ÖNB, S.n. 12.899, into which no fewer than three blank quires have been bound, and Paris, BM, 920, into which one blank quire was inserted; see Kwakkel 2002a, 279 and 258, respectively). If we are dealing with an entire quire, then we could consider the folios containing the *Passion play* as a separately produced entity. Judging by their analogous *mise en page* (writing space and number of lines match those of the *Limburg sermons*), we are most likely dealing with a transcription that was specially produced to be appended to the *Limburg sermons*, as represented in scenario B in the figure below (for this type of manuscript, see Kwakkel 2002a, 5–6 and Kwakkel 2002b, 17). It is quite conceivable that the first production unit had existed as a loose entity up until that time, i.e. for a number of decades. There is something to be said for both scenarios. For the relationship between the two texts in manuscript H, however, how this academic question is resolved is of no consequence: in both cases the *Passion play* is closely associated with the *Limburg sermons*. In the remainder of this description of the manuscript it is assumed that scenario A is the correct one.

In conclusion we may note that thanks to Gumbert's observations the connection between the two main hands has become more solid: the scribe of the *Passion play*, the younger of the two, can probably be localized in the direct vicinity of the early fourteenth-century repository of the The Hague transcription of the *Limburg sermons*. Although this (unknown) location need not necessarily be the same place where the scribe of the *Limburg sermons* carried out his work; it would seem, given the brief period of time separating the scribal activities of both main hands, that there is something to be said for situating them at the very least in each other's geographical vicinity. Future research will have to determine whether the scribes were working in one and the same venue, a possibility that should not be discounted. In other words, the scribe of the *Passion play* provides us with new material for the discussion of the early provenance of the oldest collection of Dutch prose.

The schematic representation of the genesis of the manuscript is as follows (for a discussion, see Kwakkel 2002a, 195–196 and Kwakkel 2002b, 15–16):



MS 70 E 5 as a Volume

Binding: contemporary white leather binding with braided capitals (Gnirrep 1997, no. 43.13) and the remains of a leather strap (Gnirrep 1997, no. 61.6), stitched in double cords (clamps and straps lost), presumably dating to the early fourteenth century, possibly added shortly after the *Passion play* was copied; this is quite likely the oldest extant binding in the history of Middle Dutch literature • Origin: precisely where the two transcriptions of the codex were produced cannot be ascertained; the dialect of the *Limburg sermon* indicates that the scribe came from the Maasland (Raeven 1979), whereas based on his dialect, the scribe of the *Passion play* should be located in the vicinity of Aachen (cf. Dauven-van Knippenberg 2001, 71) • Provenance: Ms. 70 E 5 is one of the 468 incunables and manuscripts discovered in 1839 in twelve chests in a government building in Maastricht, which had been hidden there when the monasteries in the region were dissolved by the French occupiers at the end of the eighteenth century (Hermans 1987); according to a heavily damaged label on the back cover, the codex belonged to the convent of Maagdendries in Maastricht, for under ultra-violet light it is just possible to make out *m*[*aa*]*gdendri*[*es*] *no.* [*11*]; the first curator of manuscripts at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Bolhuis-Van Zeeburg († 1890), was able to read the label with no difficulty at all, for in his description of manuscript H he notes: *Ligature prisca cui agglutinate est charta in qua legitur Maagdendries no. 11* [an ancient binding to which is attached a leaf upon which may be read 'Maagdendries no. 11'] (source: suspension files, Special Collections Koninklijke Bibliotheek); the same kind of label (identical format and likely in the same hand) is also found on the binding of The Hague, KB, ms. 70 E 13 (*maagdendries no. 4*), but also on that of ms. 78 A 30 (*Slavanten no. 8*), which is a clear indication that the label on manuscript H did not

originate at Maagdendries itself, but was more likely applied during the inventory taken at the dissolution in 1794 (cf. Flament 1889, 17); there is a second label on the spine of the book (bottom quarter) which bears the serial number in the aforementioned inventory: *377* (cf. Hermans 1987, 129); the upper quarter of the spine, moreover, shows traces of glue left by a third (oval-shaped) label • on the back flyleaf there is a note reading *Item ich byn sculdich johan van bynen ind johan van buten x maldere* (?) *cluren* (?) [Item I owe Johan van Bynen and Johan van Buten x maldere cluren], which bears a striking resemblance to an inscription on f. 108v of Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 41 (cf. Gumbert 1987, 169 n. 12); this sentence probably has nothing to do with a former owner or someone in his circle, but is more likely a *probatio pennae*: the *sculdech* annotation in ms. Cgm 41 is repeated several times and appears in a number of variants (*Item mijn vader schuldech* [...]; *Item mijn myster is schuldech* [...]; *Item myn soen schuldech* [...]; *Item men is schuldech Johan van Mel* [...] etc.) (source: microfilm Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, Western manuscripts).

Production units

I (ff. 1–247) [= entire codex]: ca. 1300 and 1300–1325

Codicology: parchment of fair to medium quality (repaired holes; holes at the edge of the page—with some hair remaining—on ff. 136, 153 and 156) • quires: $1^{I+2?}$ (up to and including f. 4 structure uncertain: today there are four foliated leaves, but originally there may have been more: it is possible that f. 1 and f. 3 together constitute a bifolium (a binding string is visible before f. 3); f. 2 is probably a singleton tipped in at the heart of the bifolium ff. 1/3; f. 4 is preceded by two stubs and is somehow affixed to f. 3; before ff. 1–4 there is an unfoliated pastedown (currently detached from cover), the recto side of which is glued to a rather large stay (the other half of this stay is glued to the inside of the cover; a stay has been glued to the verso of this pastedown, as well (string is visible)) [4], $2–20^{VI}$ [232], $21^{I+?}$ (structure unknown: possibly a bifolium (ff. 234/235) with a singleton pasted to it (f. 236); how f. 233 fits into the overall scheme is unclear; between quires 20 and 21 at least one gathering is missing) [236], 22^{V} [246], $23^{?}$ (original size of the quire unknown: currently only one leaf survives; the end of the *Passion play* is lacking) [247]; finally, there is another flyleaf pasted to a

stay • on several leaves there appear round, yellowish stains such as are fairly common in medieval manuscripts and were presumably left by candle-grease (cf. the margin of The Hague, KB, ms. 76 E 20, f. 94r, where identical circles may be seen and where actual candle-grease still remains) • all catchwords have been preserved, and they are very likely done by the main hand (on f. 172v the light ink of the catchword corresponds with the colour of the ink of the main text) • in the *LS* section quire signatures are present (red, in the lower margin, positioned in the middle of the page), and these are in the old style, for they consist of a Roman numeral with the diacritic for *us* (*primus, secundus*, etc.; the highest numeral is 20) • no leaf signatures survive • pricking usually visible (extra pricking next to the lowermost hole; an extra row of ten prickings appears alongside the vertical pricking on ff. 60 and 61, a double row of pricking appears on f. 237; round pricking holes appear on ff. 1–236 and 247, gash-like holes on ff. 237–246) • written space: 180 × 125 mm (entire book) • ruling: plummet (*LS*) and ink (*Passion play*); in the *LS* section there appear double horizontal ruling at the top and at the bottom (so-called 'Durchläufer'), and double vertical lines are found in the middle of the page (not always easily seen); f. 232r was not ruled • layout: 2 col., 31 lines (entire book) • in the *LS* section guide letters for initials and paraphs are still visible on the inner margin, and from time to time on the outer margin (e.g. on f. 100v), sometimes in red (e.g. on f. 106v) • every fifty leaves in the *LS* section there appears a contemporary folium number in the upper margin, middle of the page on verso: *L* (f. 50v), *C* (f. 100v), *CL* (f. 150v), *CC* (f. 202v).

Hands: hand A (*littera textualis*, ca. 1300): main text ff. 1r–232v (*LS*), corrections on erasures in lighter ink and in a slightly larger letter (see e.g. f. 5v, col. A lines 4, 27, 29; f. 5v col. B, line 16), additions and corrections in the margin in a lighter ink and a somewhat larger letter, frequently by means of *signes de renvoi* (see e.g. f. 11r, righthand margin; f. 125v, bottom margin; f. 185v, lefthand margin) • hand B (*littera textualis*, ca. 1300): titles of two sermons in the table of contents (lower margin f. 1r, bottom line f. 2v—see also Gumbert 1987, 168 n. 8) and the rubrication of *LS* (inscription of the table of contents, inscription of the sermons, paraphs and probably the numbering of the sermons in the top margin) • hand C (*littera textualis*, 1300–1325): main text ff. 233r–247v (*Passion play*), including rubrics • hand D (*littera cursiva*, based on the style of the loop on f. 150v 1300–1400): contemporary foliation on ff. 50v, 100v, 150v and 202v • the transcription of the *LS* contains

moreover a variety of corrections and additions by various fourteenth-century hands, among which: hand E (*littera cursiva*, 1300–1400, probably 1300–1350): annotation on f. 1r, top margin; hand F (*littera textualis*, 1350–1400): see f. 141v (col. B line 15) and f. 156v (col. A lines 1 and 21); hand G (*littera cursiva*, 1350–1400?): see f. 137r (righthand margin); hand H (*littera cursiva*, probably ca. 1400): see f. 18v (lefthand margin), f. 203v (col. A below lines 27 and 31). For the main hands and their dating see also Gumbert 1987, 173–175 and 178–179 (*LS*) and 171–173 (*Passion play*); a number of correcting hands are noted on p. 169.

Illumination: the transcript of the *LS* is illuminated with initials executed with the highest quality penwork (red, blue, gold); on f. 3r (fig. 3 and cover) there is moreover an historiated initial (which depicts Christ addressing his disciples, and holding a scroll with the words *et vos similes hominibus*, the theme of the first sermon); the decoration exhibits so-called 'J-frames', characteristic little bulges that emerge from the notches of the letter J; small flowers surround the penwork flourishing, the (five) petals of which have a shape so round that they seem almost to have been stamped, though this is not the case; another striking decorative motif is an arched ball ('pineapple'); which strongly resembles decorations found in The Hague, KB, 78 A 31 (*Vitae sanctorum*, end of the thirteenth century (source of the dating: G.I. Lieftinck in BNM), penwork flourishing probably somewhat younger): this manuscript has the same 'stamped' flowers, contains arched balls, and the J-frames exhibit the same little 'bulges' (fig. 4). In the *Passion play*, too, we encounter an initial executed in high quality penwork flourishing, as well as J-frames (but there is no relation to ms. 78 A 31). For more on the illumination, see also Gumbert 1987, 175–178.

APPENDIX II

THE *LIMBURG SERMONS* ACCORDING TO MANUSCRIPT H

Below is an overview of the rubrics used to refer to the 48 *Limburg sermons* in manuscript H. These rubrics are used in this book as titles for the respective sermons.

Ls. 1 [no inscription] incipit *Et vos similes hominibus*
Ls. 2 *Dets van der sonnen ende van den mone ende van haren teken* [On the Sun and the Moon and Their Signs]
Ls. 3 *Dets van gesteliken ende van gordenirden levene* [On Religious and Ordained Life]
Ls. 4 *Dit sprict van verkornen liden* [This Deals With the Chosen]
Ls. 5 *Dits wie sent Paulus getrect wart enden derden himel* [How Paul Was Transported to the Third Heaven]
Ls. 6 *Dets van onser vrouwen wiese dinde vor onsen here* [How the Virgin Mary Served Our Lord]
Ls. 7 *Hir bid ons onse vrouwe dat wi te hare comen* [Here the Virgin Mary Bids Us Come to Her]
Ls. 8 *Dets van onser vrouwen wiese Got macde* [This Is About the Virgin Mary, How God Made Her]
Ls. 9 *Dits van den apostelen* [Concerning the Apostles]
Ls. 10 *Dit compt regte op alre heilgen dage* [This Is Appropriate for Every Holy Day]
Ls. 11 *Dets wie Got den regte mensche den regten wech leit* [How God Leads the Righteous on the Path of Righteousness]
Ls. 12 *Dets dat gots willes dat wi heilech sin* [Concerning How God Wishes for Us to Be Holy]
Ls. 13 *Dit sprict van gesteliken levene ende es en lanc sermoen* [Concerning the Religious Life, and It Is a Long Sermon]
Ls. 14 *Dit sprect van seven dogden die ane onser vrouwen sin* [This Speaks of the Seven Virtues of the Virgin Mary]
Ls. 15 *Dets een gestelic sermoen ende een orberlic* [This Is a Spiritual Sermon, Both Profitable and Long]

Ls. 16 *Dets wie dwort ons heren sal wonen en ons* [This Is How the Word of Our Lord Shall Dwell Within Us]
Ls. 17 *Dit sprict van agt lessen die ons Jhesus Cristus screef* [This Speaks of Eight Lessons That Jesus Christ Wrote for Us]
Ls. 18 *Dit leert ons wie mi Gode bekennen sol* [This Teaches Us How One Should Recognize God]
Ls. 19 *Dit sprict van sent Paulus bekeringen ende es een gut sermoen* [This Speaks of St. Paul's Conversion and Is a Good Sermon]
Ls. 20 *Dit sprict van drirehande liden die in gesteliken leven sin* [This Speaks of the Three Kinds of People Who Live the Religious Life]
Ls. 21 *Dets van onser vrouwen ende gelict hare eenre wingart reven* [This Concerns Our Lady and She Is Like a Vine]
Ls. 22 *Dets wie sich Got gelict eenre blumen* [This Concerns How God Compares Himself to a Flower]
Ls. 23 *Dit sprict van IIII vrouden der guder selen* [This Speaks of Four Virtues of Good Souls]
Ls. 24 *Dets wie mi Gode suken ende venden sal* [This Concerns How One Shall Search For and Find God]
Ls. 25 *Dets van tweerehande gesteliken levene* [This Concerns Two Kinds of Religious Life]
Ls. 26 *Dets van der dogter van Syon, dats vander heiler selen* [This Concerns the Daughter of Syon, That Is, the Blessed Soul]
Ls. 27 *Dets wie der mensche in Gode blift ende Got in heme* [This Is How Man Remains in God and God in Him]
Ls. 28 *Dit sprict van XII dogeden die ane Gode sin* [This Speaks of the Twelve Virtues in God]
Ls. 29 *Dit berigt ons we met Gode wonen sal* [This Teaches Us Who Will Dwell With God]
Ls. 30 *Dit sprict van X namen die ane onsen here sin* [This Speaks of the Ten Names of Our Lord]
Ls. 31 *Dets dbuec van den palmboeme* [This Is the Book of the Palm Tree]
Ls. 32 *Dits van VIII saken dar Got mensche ombe wart* [This Concerns Eight Reasons Why God Became Man]
Ls. 33 *Dit sprict van V saken dar mi ombe te cruce sal gaen* [This Discusses Five Reasons Why One Should Go to the Cross]
Ls. 34 *Dits van V saken dar Jhesus Cristus ombe gemartelt wart* [This Concerns Five Reasons Why Christ Was Tortured]
Ls. 35 *Dit sprict van der vreiceliker martellen ons heren* [This One Speaks of the Terrible Torture of Our Lord]

Ls. 36 *Dets van der groter minnen die ons Jhesus Cristus toende an den cruce* [This Concerns the Great Love Christ Showed on the Cross]
Ls. 37 *Dets van der groeter pinen die Jhesus Cristus doegede* [This Concerns the Severe Pain Suffered by Jesus Christ]
Ls. 38 *Dets van der groeter martelen die Jhesus leit anden cruce* [This Concerns the Great Torture Suffered by Christ on the Cross]
Ls. 39 *Dits dbuec van den boegarde* [This Is the Book of the Orchard]
Ls. 40 *Dets dbuec van den twelf frogten* [This Is the Book of the Twelve Fruits]
Ls. 41 *Dit leert ons negenrehande minne* [This Teaches Us Nine Kinds of Love]
Ls. 42 *Det sin seven maniren van minnen* [This Teaches Us Seven Ways of Love]
Ls. 43 *Dets dbuec van den gesteleken winkelre* [This Is the Book of the Spiritual Wine Cellar]
Ls. 44 *Dets dbuec van heren Selfarts regelen* [This Is the Book of Lord Selfart's Rule]
Ls. 45 *Dets van der heilger selen ende es een guet sermoen* [This Concerns the Blessed Soul and Is a Good Sermon]
Ls. 46 *Dets wie onse vrouwe een besloten boegaert es* [This Concerns How the Virgin Mary Is Like an Enclosed Orchard]
Ls. 47 *Hir leert ons sent Paulus striden jhegen onse viende* [Here St. Paul Teaches Us How to Combat Our Enemy]
Ls. 48 [blank space, no rubric] incipit *Laudate dominum in sanctis eius*

APPENDIX III

CONCORDANCE

The following table presents an overview of the corpus transmission of the *Limburg sermons*. The order of the sermons in the oldest manuscript, H, forms the basis for the numbering of the texts (La exhibits the same arrangement, in so far as its contents correspond with that of H). As for the remaining manuscripts, this table shows only whether or not a given text is included therein. Manuscript Am contains diverse texts compiled from other *Limburg sermons*, in most cases of which only fragments were used. In principle every *Limburg sermon* in which at least a portion has been incorporated is included in the table below. The last two columns contain the numbering from the *St. Georgen sermons*: the first gives the order according to manuscript G, which will also be used in the new edition, followed by the Rd. used in scholarship up until now. The complex transmission of the *St. Georgen sermons* annex *Limburg sermons* has prompted several scholars to create concordances (see Wackernagel & Rieger 1964, 263–267, Lüders 1958, 57 and Seidel 2003, 8–12).

	H	Am	B1	Br1	Br2	La	W	G	
Ls. 1	+	+	+	+	–	+	–	2	Rd. 37
Ls. 2	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	3	Rd. 38
Ls. 3	+	+	–	+	–	+	–	4	Rd. 39
Ls. 4	+	+	+	–	–	+	–	5	Rd. 40
Ls. 5	+	+	–	+	–	+	–	6	Rd. 41
Ls. 6	+	+	–	–	–	+	–	12	Rd. 47
Ls. 7	+	–	–	+	+	+	–	13	Rd. 48
Ls. 8	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	14	Rd. 49
Ls. 9	+	+	–	+	–	+	–	15	Rd. 50
Ls. 10	+	+	+	–	–	+	–	16	Rd. 51
Ls. 11	+	+	–	–	–	+	–	17	Rd. 52
Ls. 12	+	+	–	+	–	+	–	18	Rd. 53
Ls. 13	+	+	–	+	–	+	–	19	Rd. 54
Ls. 14	+	+	–	+	+	+	–	20	Rd. 55
Ls. 15	+	+	+	+	–	+	–	21	Rd. 56

Table (*cont.*)

	H	Am	Bl	Br1	Br2	La	W	G	
Ls. 16	+	+	–	+	–	+	–	22	Rd. 57
Ls. 17	+	+	–	–	–	+	–	23	Rd. 58
Ls. 18	+	+	–	+	–	+	–	24	Rd. 59
Ls. 19	+	+	–	+	–	+	–	26	Rd. 61
Ls. 20	+	+	–	–	–	+	–	27	Rd. 62
Ls. 21	+	+	–	+	+	–	–	29 + 33	Rd. 64 + 69
Ls. 22	+	+	–	+	–	–	–	34	Rd. 70
Ls. 23	+	–	+	+	–	–	–	35	Rd. 71
Ls. 24	+	+	+	+	–	–	–	36	Rd. 72
Ls. 25	+	+	–	+	–	–	–	37	Rd. 73
Ls. 26	+	+	+	+	–	–	–	9 + 38	Rd. 44 + 74
Ls. 27	+	+	–	–	–	–	+	32	Rd. 68
Ls. 28	+	+	–	–	–	–	–	28	Rd. 63
Ls. 29	+	+	+	–	–	–	–	31 + 39	Rd. 66 + 75
Ls. 30	+	–	+	–	–	–	–	30	Rd. 65
Ls. 31	+	–	+	+	–	–	+	25	Rd. 60
L. 3 s 2	+	+	–	–	–	–	–		
Ls. 33	+	+	+	–	–	–	–		
Ls. 34	+	+	+	+	–	–	–		
Ls. 35	+	–	–	+	–	–	–		
L. 3 s 6	+	+	–	–	–	–	–		
Ls. 37	+	+	+	–	–	–	–		
Ls. 38	+	+	+	–	–	–	–		
L. 3 s 9	+	–	–	–	–	–	–		
Ls. 40	+	–	–	–	–	–			
L. 4 s 1	+	–	–	–	–	–	–		
Ls. 42	+	–	–	–	–	–	+		
Ls. 43	+	–	–	+	–	–	+		
Ls. 44	+	–	–	+	–	–	–		
Ls. 45	+	+	+	+	–	–	–		
Ls. 46	+	+	+	+	+	–	–		
Ls. 47	+	+	+	+	–	–	–	l	Rd. 36
L. 4 s 8	+	–	–	–	–	–	–		

APPENDIX IV

'BROTHERS' IN MANUSCRIPT H

Manuscript H contains a small number of references that indicate that it was produced for an audience of 'brothers.' In the original *St. Georgen sermons* there must undoubtedly have appeared references to women, more particularly to an audience of nuns. But the Middle High German transmission, too, contains collections that were aimed at a male audience. The following are the relevant passages in manuscript H:

Table of Contents:

In the Table of contents Ls. 40 is introduced as follows: *Det sin de XII vrogte ende es een orberlic sermoen als de brudere onsen here suln ontfaen, ende es lanc* [These are the twelve fruits, and it is a pious sermon (for) when the brothers receive the Lord, and it is long] (Kern 1895, 180,25–28).

Ls. 11

This sermon includes a longer passage concerning the chapter of faults which contains a number of references to the disciplining of the brethren:

Nu merct dit: duet een bruder *een denc dat quaet es ende weder Got ende dar die sameninge af bedruft mach werden, dis sal ic heme manen dat hit vor den* bruderen *in capitelen brenge ende sal dat dun in derre meiningen dat hi sig dar ane betere ende dat covent te vreden blive. So dun ic heme regt. Nu wert ligte der* bruder *ongeduldeg ende wert bedrueft. Dis en hebbic engene sonde, hebbict dor guet gedan. Maer dadict heme te lede ogte in wraken ogte van omminnen, dat war mi grote sonde. Wie gutlike hit oec ontfinge ogte wie vele guts draf quame, so wart mi dog sonde, want ict in quade dede ende in hate. Nu geschiet dat decke dat een* bruder *den anderen siet quaet dun ende denct: 'Nů ware dese* bruder *wert dastůne warnes dat his genade suchte ende hit beterde.' So denct hi dan her weder: 'Dis en dut nit, hi worder ligt af bedrueft.' Nu wil ic u dar tue enen raet geven die guet es ende wale mogt dun sonder sonde. Van allen dengen die gi siet ogte hoert die te wandelne sin so suldi mercken in ore conscientien weder van der wrugin meer args ogte guts comen moge. Dunt u in ore conscientien dat beter es gewrugt, so wrugt. Vendi oec dat beter es*

geswegen, so swigt. Ende also haudet ane enen igeliken dengen, so bliftdis sonder sonde. Nu geschiet decke dat een mensche een denc ombe dbetste duet ende compt ten ergsten. Es heme dat sonde? Jaet, est also dat hiet met eengen denge mogte hebben versien. Ende ogt van sinre onbescheidenheit ligte es gescheit, also dat hit met harden worden ogte met wreden heft also tue bragt dat der bruder *vor gut en can genemen die gewrugt es, so magt heme wale ene sonde sin. Mar heft hi alle di denc versien die te versinne waren na sinre bescheidenheit so hi betste mag, ende dan met minliken ende met sechten worden sinen* bruder *maent sinre scout, al compt dan eneg arg draf, dans heme engeen sonde. Dit hebbic al dar ombe gesproken op dat gi wet wie der mensche sondeget ane sin evenkersten. Want dats ene der sonden die den mensche hindert op den regten wech din onse here leit den regten mensche iegent himelrike*
[Now hearken to this: if a brother does something that is evil and goes against God, and threatens thereby to disturb the community, then I shall therefore demand that he lay it before the brethren in chapter, and I shall do so with the intention that he shall thereby better himself and maintain peace in the monastery. In this way do I do him justice. Now, the brother in question may likely become impatient or distressed. In this I have done no wrong. as long as my motives are good. But had I done it to hurt him, or for vengeance, or out of enmity, then I would have committed a great wrong. No matter how well he received it or however much he benefited from it, I would still have done wrong, for I would have done it out of evil and hate. Now, it frequently happens that one brother sees another do wrong and thinks: 'This brother deserves to be warned that he should seek mercy and better his ways.' And furthermore he thinks: 'However, I will not do it, for it will surely displease him.' Now I would give you further advice that is good, and which you may carry out without doing wrong. Of all things that you see or hear that may require correction you should consider through her conscience whether denouncing them for it would cause more bad than good. If you consider in her conscience that it is better to denounce them it, then denounce them it. If, however, you find that it would be better to keep silent, then keep silent. Do this in all such matters, then you will do no wrong. Now it frequently happens that a person does something with good intentions, but it turns out for the worst. Is he to blame? Yes, indeed, if it is the case that he could somehow have anticipated it. And if it came about due to his courseness, such that he brought it about by means of hard or cruel words that the brother who was cannot possibly feel comfortable with it, then he has indeed done wrong. But if he has anticipated everything that might be anticipated

according to his best judgement, and he then admonishes his brother for his transgression with loving and gentle words, though bad things come of it, then he does no wrong. I have said all of this so that you know how man might transgress against his fellow Christian. For that is one of the sins that hinders a person on the path of righteousness upon which our Lord leads the righteous person to the heavenly kingdom.] (Kern 1895, 292:11–293:19).

The oldest manuscript containing the *St. Georgen sermons* G constantly refers in the corresponding passage to *swestir*, which is in all likelihood the original reading: *Nv merkint diz: Tůt ain swestir ain dinc, daz vbil ist unde widir got ist, alde dauon diu samenunge betrůbit mac werdin, des sol ich sie laiden ze capile*… [Now hearken to this: if a sister does something that is evil and goes against God, or through which the community might be disturbed, then I shall lead her to chapter…]. (G, ff. 51ra–51va). In A, too these have been altered to *brůder: Nu merkent dis: tůt ain brůder ain ding daz úbel ist und wider Got ist oder da von dú samnung betrůbet wird* etc (Rieder 1908, 196:5–33).

Ls. 13

This sermon is entirely devoted to the religious life and in that context refers a number of times to an audience of monks, for example: *ende sal sig een igelic bruder dis vlitegen dat hi vretsam sie met sinre geselscap dar hi bi es* [and every brother shall earnestly strive to conduct himself peacefully in the community of which he is a part] (Kern 1895, 315:17–19; see further 316,11 and 13, 321,9, 16, 20, 24 and 27, and 322,7). In the corresponding passages G reads consistently *swestir*(*on*) [sister] and the personal pronoun *ir*, even in the numerous citations from the Church Fathers, which in principle are more general in nature (cf. ff. 59va–59vb and 62ra–62va). Compared to G, H is more generic, which is expressed in particular by the term *evenkersten* (fellow Christian; cf. Kern 1895, 321:6 and 26). In these passages A opts for the neutral *brůdern* or *eben cristen* [brethren or fellow Christian], which in principle includes all of Christendom (cf. Rieder 1908, 212:7, 216:14–217,10). There is one instance in Ls. 13 concerning a frequently occuring situation in a monastery whereby one *enen bruder tenen ambagte kist* [elects a brother to an office] (Kern 1895, 336:9–10). At that point G speaks of a *swester* who is elected *priolinvn* or *suppriolinvn* [prioress] (f. 67va).

Ls. 25

In this sermon a distinction is made between two types of religious life: those who work and those who pray. On three occasions mention is made in the following fashion of a monastery populated by monks: *Nu hort wie der cloester gesirt es alse een dal vol schonre blumen. Dar bi sin betekent die brudere in din clostere* [Now hear how the monastery is arranged like a valley filled with beautiful flowers. By these are meant the brothers in that monastery] (Kern 1895, 417:26–28; cf. 418:3 and 21). The corresponding Rd. 73 is not preserved in manuscript G, but that will undoubtedly have mentioned nuns. Rd. 73 is contained in its entirety in manuscript Z and, as one would expect, mentions monks; Z was produced, afterall, by the Dominicans of Basel. A has been abbreviated to the point where it is not possible to comment on this aspect (cf. Rieder 1908, 315:26–30).

Ls. 31

In this fairly idiosyncratic adaptation of Rd. 60 there are two references to a male monastery: *ende sal al ombe gaen in din cloester van bruder te brudere ende sal sonderlike dogede leren* [and in that monastery he shall go from brother to brother and shall learn particular virtues] (Kern 1895, 454:9–10) and *dassin die dogede die hi gegadert heft in sinen cloestere van enen igeliken bruder* [and those are the virtues that he has collected in his monastery from every brother] (Kern 1895, 455:4–6). In keeping with the pattern discussed thus far, in the corresponding passages G reads *swestir*, whereas A has *brůder* (Rieder 1908, 269:12–13 (A) and 30–32 (G), 270: 20–21, respectively (G; A has been altered here).

APPENDIX V

TWO *LIMBURG SERMONS* IN TRANSLATION

Here below follow integral translations of two *Limburg sermons* frequently cited in this book, namelijk *Dbuec van den palmboeme* (The Book of the Palm Tree; Ls. 31; Kern 1895, 439–466) and *Dbuec van den boegaerde* (The Book of the Orchard; Ls. 39; Kern 1895). In preparing this translation we have not attempted an exhaustive identification of Biblical citations and other potentially identifiable references, nor does our translation reflect the text of such original sources. This is due mainly to the fact that many of these references have been rendered by the Middle Dutch authors in often very idiosyncratic form. We have therefore translated such passages as literally as possible. A very few passages remained resistent to our attempts to discern their full meaning; these, too, have been rendered as literally as possible.

Ls. 31, *This is the Book of the Palm Tree*

"Dixi: 'Ascendam in palmam etc.'" These words are spoken by the Prophet, who speaks thus: I have climbed your palm tree and shall taste your fruit. The palm tree—understood spiritually—has seven branches, and every branch has one blossom and one bird. And every bird sings a different song, and every blossom has its own unique fragrance and unique colour and unique beauty.

By this palm tree is meant every blessed person who sings sweet songs of God and generates beautiful blossoms. For he who with steadfast virtues imbues his works and his life with these meanings, he may well say: "Dixi: 'Ascendam in palmam: I have climbed your palm tree and there will I rest.'" For whoever ascends to the seventh branch, he will embark upon eternal rest, where his soul will rest with God in abundant sweetness. And after that rest there quickly follows eternal rest, of which I read: "Hec requies mea: this is my rest, this is my inheritance: here shall I rest eternally with the living God."

The root from which this tree springs, that is true and steadfast belief. For from its roots wax the fear of hell and hope of eternal joy and of eternal bliss and joy of all good works: all of these grow forth from

believing that one will be rewarded according to his works, both good and bad. And therefore he leaves off sin and does good works, because he believes that he may earn eternal life with good works, and because he believes in a life after this one. Concerning this St. Augustine says: "It is a virtue of faith that we believe that which we cannot see. That a person should believe that which he can observe is of little consequence; but when a person believes what he is told about God and what he cannot see with his own eyes, that is worthy of gratitude. For it is the obligation of every Christian person who is to be saved, that he firmly believe in the source of Christianity and all that he is told concerning God's might, concerning his wisdom, his goodness, his eternity and his righteousness: a person must believe all of this so firmly in his heart that he demonstrate it in his works. For just as all works are dead without faith, so too all faith is dead without good works. For whosoever lives in deadly sin and lives unrighteously against the commandments of our Lord and against His counsel, that person does not have true faith. He who has true faith, also has just and good works; for the root of all good works is rooted in the heart and creates a foundation there, and out of those roots grows the palm tree.

The trunk of this tree is voluntary poverty, that a person desire nothing more than basic necessities. And even if he were to experience the rough cracks and ridges in these, he would gladly suffer it for God, who was so poor that he had so very little with which his Mother could swaddle him when he was born. For his lodgings were a common stall and his bed was a manger on that first night, when he was born. Ah, dear people, consider how poor our Creator was for you, and suffer poverty and lack for Him; for he spoke thus: "When I was first born I fell into poverty, and in poverty I remained until my death." And concerning this he speaks so frequently: "Blessed are the poor: I will myself gently console them."

The palm tree directs all of its beauty upward toward heaven, and below it is narrow and small. So, too, a man should voluntarily abandon all his earthly riches for the heavenly kingdom, and eagerly be poor and despised on earth: so shall he be exalted to heaven. For thus says our Lord: "Blessed are the poor: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The first branch is that a man must acknowledge where he came from and where he will be going so very soon. For no man lives long, as the priest admonishes us: when he puts the ashes on our heads, he speaks thus: "Memento quod cinis es, etc.: remember that you are dust and into dust you shall return." When a man acknowledges that his nature

is so frail, he also acknowledges that all the virtues he possesses, and all that is good about him, he has from God; as the Prophet says: "All of our bliss and our virtue and whatever good there is in us, all of that comes from the grace of our Lord and is contained in his power."

The bird that sits on this branch is the peacock. It is the peacock's nature that at midnight, when it is fast asleep, it cries out miserably and awakens himself, and he checks to see whether he has his speculum on his head; and if he sees it, he sleeps without worry. By this is meant the blessed man, who shall have the nature of the peacock. If he is fast asleep at midnight and then awakes, he will check to see whether his virtue is directed toward God with burning Love, or whether it has cooled or is entirely lost. And if he finds that splendid mirror of virtue on the head of his soul, truly he may then sleep soundly without worry.

The speculum which he shall find on the head of the queen, his soul, that is burning Love, directed toward God; if he finds this speculum, he may then sleep peacefully. Thus says the holy man: "Lord, though I sleep, grant me the grace that my soul should awake with thee, and that I be well protected by virtue." Man is obliged always to protect his virtue, both day and night; for just as men always observe the peacock for its splendid feathers, so too the devil observes and watches the soul of the blessed man and exerts himself to discover how he might deprive him of the beauty of his virtue. Therefore a man must always be on his guard, and as soon as he awakes he must check to see whether his desire and his Love burns for God. Thus says St. Augustine: "As soon as my eyes are overcome by sleep, so shall my soul and my heart keep watch for God, and consider how my desire burns with steadfastness."

The flower that blossoms on this branch is the violet; it is small and celestial blue. This betokens humility. The color of the blossom betokens the desire that a man must always have for God, and that he should perform all of his labors in His name and in honor of Him with whom we shall be honoured in heaven together in the heavenly kingdom, namely Jesus Christ, the holy bridegroom of the soul. The diminutive size of the flower betokens humility. For it is right and proper for the humble man that he should always denigrate and humble himself before the people: thus he will be made great before God. So we read in the Book of Kings about a certain king to whom our Lord spoke: "Because you were small in your own eyes, therefore I shall establish you as a king over the entire nation of Israel." And David also says: "Humility paves the way to heaven and exalts man in the heavenly kingdom."

The next branch is compassion. The blessed person shall have compassion toward every person with regards to his life and soul, and he will carry it with him. Though he may not be able to give him much, he will nevertheless bear good will toward him and have mercy upon him; and if he is not able to console him with gentle words, he will perform deeds of compassion with a good will. If it happens that a person should do things that go against God, he shall not turn too sternly against him nor harden his heart in excessive righteousness over that person's transgression, but shall consider what he would have others do to him if he were guilty, and that is what he should do to others, and he shall pray to God that He have mercy upon that person. He who has the authority and power to censure injustice shall sternly censure that which deserves it, but he shall always temper justice with mercy, and do so with a gentle heart and loving words. If the transgression is so great that he is compelled to correct and reprove it with severe words, then he shall afterwards behave kindly and lovingly, and deal with him in such a way that he will know that the reprimand of his transgression was born of justice and not malice. One should always keep this in mind, that if punishment with too much sternness or too much mercy cannot be avoided, he will prefer to be tormented with rather more mercy than sternness; for you should know that the punishment is easier to bear if meted out with mercy rather than sternness. For our Lord himself says, "Behold me and learn kindness and gentleness through me."

The bird that sits upon this branch is the hoopoe; it is wont to fly over graves and lament the dead. The blessed should do the same thing: he should lament the wretched death that the soul receives because of its mortal sins, and he should fly over the dead, that is to say the multitude of mortal sins that slay men's souls, and he will observe how those souls lie slain by mortal sin. And he will consider how man deserves to suffer eternal torment in hell by virtue of just one of these mortal sins, were it not that God in His mercy and in His pity had come to his aid. And he will then recognize that he has committed so many injustices against God through sin, and he will lament this with a fervent heart and pray to beneficent God that He might quicken the dead through His mercy and true sorrow for their guilt, and heal them of their sickness entirely with His divine medicine, and preserve them in in a good life.

The flower that blossoms on this branch is an water lily; it is very beautiful and changes immediately. This signifies the instability of the world: its splendor and its joy is beautiful but quickly passes. By this the blessed will consider that everything on earth is transitory, and lasts but a little while. He who lives today, is dead tomorrow; he who is healthy today, is sick tomorrow; he who is wealthy today, is poor tomorrow. Thus it is brought to a wretched and swift end, and he who enjoys the greatest confort and wealth in this world will suffer the most in the next. Concerning this St. Bernard says: "All of your sins will become worms in hell and will burrow continuously in your heart." And our Lord himself says of this: "Woe, woe be to the rich men! They will never receive solace from God. For they have loved possessions and prestige and transitory joys more than they did me: on account of this they will mourn forever." In this way the blessed will recognize that the world is transitory, and turn his desire and his love toward He who is non-transitory, namely God.

The third branch is penance. The blessed shall chastize his body with the labor and sufferings mandated and commanded by his order and his rule, and always give himself only what is necessary, and he will always strive to do his labor and his work with humility, neither too little nor too much, and always treat his body with moderation, so that his desires do not exceed his abilities and he becomes disobedient to God.

The bird that sits on this branch is the swan; by nature he knows beforehand when he will die, and if he is to die on the morrow, then today he sings a lovely song. This bird betokens the blessed: he should be mindful that his death may come on any day, and complete daily a full day's journey. And if he is mindful of this, then he will all the more joyfully serve God with song and readings, and he will all the more eagerly and happily serve God so that others will know that he would eagerly be with God.

The flower that blossoms on this branch is the lily; this flower always grows upwards toward heaven and is always green. The lily signifies the zealous purity that one shall demonstrate in both thought and deed. And just as the stem and leaves of the lily are always green, so too should the blessed soul grow and blossom in all virtues and always wax in good deeds and good living. Just as the lily always grows upwards toward heaven, so too shall his heart and his desire always be directed

upward toward God. When God sees that he is ripe for the plucking, He then plucks him and keeps him eternally in the heavenly city in joy and love.

The fourth branch is sweet thoughts. If a person weeps sweetly for our Lord, such that he ernestly laments the suffering of our Lord, or recognizes that God has granted him great mercy, and thanks Him for this with sweet tears, this is called sweet thoughts. This praise and these sweet thoughts increase the virtue of the person, and recommend to God that he should pour out his mercy upon his soul.

The bird that sits upon this branch is the bird with the countenance of a man, i.e. a harpy. It is in the nature of this bird that as soon as it flies from its nest it kills the first person that it encounters, then it flies to a body of water and washes its face therein, and when it then sees that he and that person have the same face, that their countenances are indentical and that he has slain his brother, thereafter he will never again be joyful. This bird signifies every blessed person, for we have all slain our brother Jesus Christ. And one must be mindful that he has slain his Brother with his sins, He who was his brother in both divine and human nature. If he sees and recognizes this, then it goes without saying that he will never again take joy in anything that is transitory.

The flower that blossoms on this branch is the rose, which is beautiful and lovely to the eye. By this we are to understand the burning love that a person shall have toward God. He is to contemplate the great love that God showed toward us when He suffered his wretched death on our behalf, and he must contemplate how great was the love with which He suffered it. And through that contemplation his heart will become receptive, and his love toward God will be so strong and so intense that he would rather suffer death than anger God through any mortal sin.

The fifth branch is desire, that a person should desire our Lord with all of his senses so strongly that he directs all of his desire toward the desirable God. Such a soul may well speak with the Soul in the Book of Love: "Filie Iherusalem: your daughters of Jerusalem, tell my beloved that I languish with love for him."

The bird that sits upon this branch is the nightengale: it sings very joyfully all through the summer night, and when it becomes aware that night is giving way to day, it sings more loudly. This signifies the religious. When the night of sin and proud living gives way in him to virtue and his life becomes more tranquil and begins to improve, and he acknowledges God in all things and loves Him more than he did

before, then he sings more loudly: then night gives way to day, and he praises God with all his deeds even more joyfully. For he rejoices in that heavenly estate that God will grant to him after this brief life, and he readies himself for this at all times in heart and soul, in order that he may come there in honor. For our Lord says in His Gospel, "See to it that you are always ready, for you know not when I shall come."

The flower that blossoms on this branch is the *Acroclinium roseum*; its hue is not uniform, and this betokens the religious person who so pines for God that he becomes pale and loses the rosy color in his face and all of his zeal, and has reined in his desire, so that his soul is been cleansed for God and his heart clear and pure, so pure that God would eagerly dwell there: toward this purity he has directed all of his ardor, such that he pays little heed to external beauty. This person may well say: "Nigra sum: though I am pale on the outside, do not marvel, for heavenly grace makes me go pale. What does it matter how pale I am on the outside, I am exceedingly beautiful on the inside and pleasing before the face of God."

The sixth branch is prayer, with which the soul prays with righteous desire for Him to come to her, and says: "Come here to us, dear, beloved Lord! Come here, sweet Bridegroom! You are Jesus, my most precious good!" If the pure soul prays thus with great desire and a chaste life, then He will come and impart all that is lacking in the soul, and impart to that person all things that he desires, as are right and appropriate for him.

The bird that sits on this branch is the swallow; it eats its food while in flight. So, too, does the religious: he takes in the food of the soul while in flight. This flight is the desire by means of which the soul flies to the heavenly realm. During this flight, that is, with this desire, the soul is fed; this food feeds it such that it need not seek consolation nor refuge in any thing other than heavenly consolation alone: there it seeks refuge and is fed. Thus says St. Augustine: "You should avoid all transitory consolation and set your hearts on heavenly consolation alone."

The flower that blossoms on this branch is the daisy; it is in its nature that it always turns toward the sun. So, too, does the religious person: he turns his heart, his senses, and all his desire toward the heavenly and living Sun, that with its beauty has illuminated both the heavenly and the earthly realms and which is light and joyful and a mirror of all joy and eternal bliss. The blessed person turns his heart and will always toward this living sun so utterly that his desire is for all that God does

and commands, and not at all saddened by whatever God causes to happen, so utterly does his will conform to the will of our Lord.

The seventh branch is perfect sweetness. If one climbs all the branches of this tree with steadfast virtues until he arrives at the highest branch, then our Lord grants him such great sweetness to that pure soul that it becomes unbearable to his body, so unbearable that he can hardly endure it. For that sweetness is so intense that all strength fails him, and he is not able to comprehend it on account of natural weakness: and the spirit must carry the body: so weak does he eventually become on account of divine sweetness. And then the spirit becomes so strong that it supports the body, just as when you see healthy people supporting those who are sick, thus the spirit carries the weak body where it must go by means of divine strength.

The bird that sits on this branch is called Phoenix; that bird dwells always on Mount Oliveti [Mount of Olives]. This mountain is high, and so noble that many good herbs grow on it. This bird is also always alone, and there is not more than one of these birds. And if he wishes to reproduce, then he gathers the most noble herbs that he can find, and he builds himself a house. And he flies up into the sky and he flies so close to the sun that it scorches him; and he comes back down into his house and he beats his wings so hard that he catches fire, and he burns himself up, along with those herbs. And out of his ashes grows a new Phoenix, and in this way that bird reproduces.

By this is signified the religious person, who always dwells on the high Mount Oliveti, that is a high and religious and holy life, which resembles well the high Mount Oliveti. For just as the mountain is raised up and exalted from the valley, so too is the religious life exalted above the world.

And the noble herbs that grow on that mountain signify the noble virtues that grow in the spiritual person. For if anyone were to travel the entire world in search of virtue, he would not find such high and noble virtue as in the religious life. For the religious life is just like an orchard and a mountain of virtues, and in that way it is similar to the high Mount Oliveti, where the Phoenix dwells.

And when the Phoenix grows old and weak, he renews himself. This too the religious person must do: if he begins to weaken and to slow down in the service of our Lord and his virtues begin to lessen in his good practices and his good works, indeed, he must renew himself, and he shall go about his monastery from brother to brother and learn particular virtues. And he shall observe how they assiduously practice their

virtues with obedience, with humility, with gentleness, with peacefulness and with other good works. These are the virtues and the noble herbs that the religious person must gather and collect in his heart; and he will observe how his virtue has decayed and lessened with respect to his good practices and the burning desire and love that he should have toward God. And when he acknowledges his failures, he will then fly up to the divine Sun, and he will turn his desire so intensely toward God that he will be warmed by the heavenly sunshine, and he will fly so close to God in his intense desire that his soul will receive embers from the living Sun. And with that heat he will come back down into his house, that is in his heart, and he will beat his wings such that they will catch fire and burn with virtue.

By the wings are signified the virtues of the soul: these one must beat together in the practice of good works, and he will perform them so assiduously and so eagerly in all virtue such that those herbs will catch fire, that is the virtues that he has gathered in his monastery from each brother: he will perform these so eagerly that they will all catch fire and burn up. And by this fire he will be renewed, and slowness and lukewarmness will be consumed within him, and he will then be a new person. Thus says our Lord in the Gospel: "Thou shalt put on the new man," and thus shall one renew himself like the Phoenix does.

The flower that grows on this branch is the flower of the field. By this is signified our Lord Jesus Christ, who is like a wildflower. For just as the flower of the field is available to all who wish to pick it, so too our Lord is available to all who desire Him. The wildflower is available to one and all, it is picked by both rich and poor alike, and by all those who wish to and are able, for no one prohibits them from doing so. So, too, our Lord is a common wildflower, who does not hide Himself from anyone. He is available to all through his cross: there He would receive and console all those who come to Him and desire Him ardently and seek Him out with a humble heart.

Ah, dear people, go on this plain, to your Maker and reveal to Him all your travails and your shortcomings with a humble heart: for surely, He is so kind, He will console you in your time of need. People, be mindful of what He Himself says: "I am a wildflower in my garments and in my communality. I am clothed in red garments, that is my rose-colored blood, which I shed for you. Do not be afraid: I am your creator, I am the nobility of your soul and your nature. Behold, by this means I have taken pity on you, and I came from heaven from my Father's bosom and have come looking for you." And so says St.

Augustine: "He came from heaven from his Father's bosom and came to earth into his Mother's womb in order that He might seek out mankind and restore him to his nobility." "Ah, dear people," says our Lord, "I am your father: moreover I love you so much that I shed my blood for you. Now tell me, dear people," says he, "how your love has clothed me. For I am like the wildflower in my garments. We together are accessible to all who desire us: our life, our death, our kingdom, is accessible to all. My Father and I and the Holy Ghost, we are all together accessible to all who with a humble and just heart desire consolation and mercy from us: to you we would give ourselves with all consolation, and after this wretched life we would be its reward and its joy; for no one is too sinful for us. We are a gleaner, and what the devil loses, we pick up and keep."

Hear now of the great goodness of God: he compares himself to an gleaner. Just as you may observe, there where the rich folk harvest, the poor follow and glean what their workers let fall, so too does God. The devil is the rich man and goes ahead with his workers throughout the world and cuts down many a noble soul that God had purchased with his blessed blood. In this way our Lord is the poor man who always follows behind and gleans, and wherever he finds a soul, he picks it up and keeps it. Ah, verily, by this one may see the great mercy of God and the great infidelity of mankind, for God has given man the free will to choose whether he wants God or the devil, and if the cursed sinner chooses the devil, by his own free will, and abandons God, then that is a great misfortune.

Now our Lord speaks thus: "Woe be to you, people, consider that I am a gleaner for you." He also says: "Dear people, consider how I have sought you. I left heaven," says he, "my rightful dwelling place, and came to earth and became a man and sacrificed my heart from my body and my soul because I sought your heart and your soul. Dear people, remember this and take pity on my misery, for I have suffered misery out of love for you: now give me your heart, which I have sought on earth. Turn to me, give me your heart as a resting place and your soul as a lover, this is what I desire." Ah, dear people, turn back to your sweet Wildflower: He is so full of comfort, He will receive you with great love. Woe be to all those who have ever turned away from that noble Flower, may they hastily turn again with true penance to His mercy and seek consolation in his compassion with genuine humility, for He himself says: "All those who come to me with true humility shall find mercy in me."

Now you must know that God is not just a wildflower, as He calls Himself: to His friends He is also a lily in an enclosed orchard. For just as men are always eager to look upon the lily in its enclosed garden, so too God is always to be desired in your peaceful hearts. If the blessed one exerts himself to live peacefully with everyone who is with him, both on the inside and the outside, in word and deed, without weakness and without malice and ill will, then this person is truly like unto the enclosed garden. He who closes off his heart such that all mistrust and all malice and rancor are shut out, and whose mouth is so firmly shut that he says not a single bad word about anyone, neither in his presence nor behind his back, and who always turns everything that he hears and sees to good, that person is truly an enclosed orchard. In this orchard God wishes to rest sweetly and joyfully with the sacred soul. Those who carry this blissful orchard with them know this well, for they frequently feel that they may not remain silent, and they must reveal either in words, or through facial expressions or in their voice, the great power that dwells within them. And if those who have envious and rotten hearts hear them, they are annoyed, because they themselves do not feel it; but they do not carry this orchard with them, and thus they do not taste its fruit.

To such a soul our Lord says: "I have desired that I might see thy face." And the soul may well reply: "My beloved is gone down." Thus it says in the Book of Love: "Come hither, my Beloved, into your orchard! Come now, dear Bridegroom: my garden is lush with many kinds of flowers and noble virtues, and appointed with the grass of ardent desire. Come now, Lover of love, which exalts all one's senses; come into your orchard, which is walled in by the fear of losing your love, and moreover with watchman who will guard your love. Come now here, discipline and shame, and stand before the gates and keep watch so that my Love and I are not harmed by any vice. Now come here, my Embracer, and kiss me; for thine orchard is well enclosed by the moat of true humility." Thus then says our Lord: "I will climb down into my orchard and behold the flowers in your valley and whether your vines bear any fruit."

The flowers in your valley are the pure virtues in your protected heart, and the flourishing vines are your joyfulness in God. Whatever befalls a person, this he will gladly bear in God, and in all his works he will possess an ardent joy in God. And he will always be eager to suffer sorrow and misfortune in honor of Love. Those are the vines that will always flourish sweetly and lovingly in your heart, when a person

is joyful in the face of adversity. For the extent to which a person can bring deprivation upon himself, to that same degree will he be possessed of God. For that a lover should behave lovingly toward a beloved is a matter of small love; but a person who in the face of suffering and sorrow is joyful in God, in him are found those flowers and the vines amongst which God would rest. As He Himself says, "I have rested in the shade of my beloved, and the fruit of her virtue has fed me, and that food is exceedingly sweet in my mouth and in my throat."

In this enclosed orchard of the pure of heart God and the soul are united. This is a lovely and pleasing orchard in which the soul is united with God. Concerning this pure union our Lord says, "I have loved this union exceedingly, and I became a man out of love for her and endured suffering and pain in the days of my youth. I have become a lover in her presence: her beauty, her splendid figure and her loveliness have made a lover out of me. It was for this reason that I died on the cross, so that this beloved would become my lover and she and I could be united in love." Now this has taken place in this enclosed orchard: there God and the blessed soul repose together, there the soul enjoys His sweetness, as He Himself says in the Book of Love: "I sat in the shade of him whom I desired, and enjoyed his sweet fruit."

These words are also to be understood in what she spoke: "I have rightly sat down and lay to rest at the wise stock of his humanity and hungrily admired the noble fruits of his goodness and hastened to be in the shade of the Holy Ghost." Ah, dear one, how thoroughly sweet is this repose in which God rests in this paradise, that is a heart blossoming with all virtues; and the soul rests then once again in the noble shade of his divinity. May god protect the soul who reposes in true desire in the shade of the Holy Ghost: that soul is well protected from all fears. To the soul our Lord speaks in the Book of Love: "Ah, how lovely you are in your nobility!"

See now who is worthy of this nobility. Verily, those are the complete and humble of heart. They are not those marked by false signs of religion, they are neither backbiters nor deceivers, they are neither hypocrites nor those with dissembling hearts, nor is it those who play at dice. These dice players are wont to work hard all day for their wages, and when they have them, they go at night to the taverns and gamble all of their earnings away, and then some. Thus do those who bear the outward signs of religion: they fast, they hold vigils, they pray, they cry, they genuflect and exert themselves greatly, and sometimes it comes to pass that they negate all of this with one false pleasure and

one small consolation that they take in people from whom they derive false pleasure. Ah! To be sure, they are not well advised for religious should seek no consolation in anyone other than God alone. Nor do they do so; for those who seek consolation from people are no religious: though they wear the religious habit, they wear it to their damnation, for they are false hypocrites and prove that they are no religious. Whoever this applies to should be on his guard, for they are not possessed of a fervent and humble heart, the kind that God adorns and enobles with His mercy.

See now what this nobility is, whether God comes down here to the soul, or the soul ascends toward God. The nobility that the soul receives, she receives through spiritual prayer, when all earthly matters are forgotten. There God receives the soul in His love and grants her the power to remember that she may find her Bridegroom in the highest heaven in her thoughts. In her discernment He grants her insight and such wisdom as to allow her to draw God back inside her by means of the bright mirror image of God. And as that knowledge is sweet, so is her heart pure, and so truly can she know God through his mirror image, which she has received from Him. Thus the Supreme Good brings an incandescence within the soul and that incandescence demonstrates to the soul the nobility that her Bridegroom has created within her; and she then embraces Him with great desire, in sweet love, and she enjoys him with cheerful and great joy, and receives from full comfort and complete joy, without fail, in all things. But this state of repose may not last long, and yet all the while that it does last everything that is mortal in a person must fall silent: neither the mouth nor the mortal tongue may speak, but all the powers of fervor abide during that time, without woe. Nor shall a person suppose that during that time he should leave off his prayers in any way, for Wisdom prays for him, his dear brother Jesus Christ, to His Father in the higher divinity. And the Father then reveals to the Holy Ghost all the needs of mankind: what they cannot pray for or desire themselves, these things God ordains in the soul through the Holy Ghost.

And yet that moment may not last for long; for that joy and that sweetness exceed the tolerances of human strength. And that sweetness is unwavering. All vice and falseness has been banished and she is adorned with heavenly virtues. To other people the words and deeds, the entire life of such folk seem a flourishing paradise of virtue and enlightened living. Nevertheless they are sometimes attacked by their false comrades. And that is hardly surprising, for it is the lot of the good

that they suffer for the greater righteousness of God, and it prepares them for perfection and opens up for them the path to virtue and to utter perfection. All those who desire to achieve perfection must first toil earnestly and pay heed to what God ordains for them. For it avails me little to waste my good labor and lose my hard-won harvest.

By this take heed that you guard against anything that might sully the bloom or honeydew of your flourishing paradise, for that would render it barren, and wither the noble fruit of the virtues of your heart, under which God desires to repose with the soul and with which He wishes to be fed. For this is the enclosed orchard where God and the soul are to be united. Hear now, dear soul who wishes to be the bride of the noble Lover. I advise you to refrain from all fleshly delights and from all worldy, transitory matters. If you would attain the highest nobility of your Bridegroom, then flee from all inconstancy and direct all of your diligence to your Lover with all your heart and strength. Thereafter direct all of your diligence to your inner paradise, that it be adorned and flourishing with all manner of flowers of noble virtue: thus a tree will wax in you called the wisdom of God. That is the noble wisdom that is planted and grows in the noble soul and which bears noble fruit with which sweet Jesus, her bridegroom, is nourished and fed.

Now, many people, if they hear others speak of God or of virtue or of the nobility of the soul or of the joy of heaven, then they desire to be good—it is certainly a good thing to strive for—but precious little are they willing to do to that end. For, alas—May God help us all!—we are all weak in virtue and zealous in pleasure: Some insignificant thing can annoy and grieve us to such a point that we put Love away. This is great baseness. For at all hours we must content Love by our life.

Now, there are people who have a deficiency that plagues and hinders them severely. For because they are imperfect and full of wilfulness, and little experienced in God they are therefore incapable of believing that anyone else has received anything from God. And if they see or hear the wonder of God in those who are good, in their words or their deeds or in their countenance, then they say that it is wrong, because they do not understand it. If a laymen does not understand the gospel, does that make it false?—Indeed, no! "Yes," such people say, "what are these people carrying on about, with their wailing and their fancy words? By Lo, I don't know what it is: it seems evil to me." Moreover, although they do not know whether it is good or evil, evil has so weighed down the scale of their cruel hearts that it is always tipped toward evil. The greatest wonder that one can comprehend, is that which good people

grasp in the spirit who faithfully follow the God. And if God fills good people with so much good from within that they cannot contain it, that they must sometimes burst out and overflow in words or in countenance or in exclamations due to the wonder that God sometimes infuses the soul with from above, is that such an evil thing? Now you see and hear how one person may frighten another with danger, so that he cries out and turns pale! And if God works more marvels in the soul than any person may work externally, is it a wonder that he cries out and turns pale? By Lo, no! But those who pervert it are wrong, for God may do all things and has the power to give to one more than He does to another according to His command and wish.

Let us pray that he allows us to ascend this palm tree diligently and wisely to the topmost branch, where may be found eternal tranquility, and to be diligent in our vigilance, especially in dubious subjects in which we know not the truth. We cannot possibly comprehend the commands of God, who is almighty, let us keep ourselves from from calamity! May he help us in this, pater et filius et spiritus sanctus. Amen.

Ls. 39, *This is the Book of the Orchard*

May God greet us all via the archangel Gabriel, who greeted Mary when she was filled with the Holy Spirit. I admonish you all, beloved of God, that you unlock your hearts and open your eyes internally and devote yourselves to pure *minne*. Discover who God is and how he has loved you, both before you came into this world and since. Behold in how fatherly a fashion he has protected you, both when you were aware of it and when you were not. Consider what He has forgiven you for and what He has promised you. Comport yourself accordingly and give thanks to Him and give your heart to no one other than Him, for He has already given His to you.

Oh, noble loving soul, give thanks to Him for this with love, and do not love as the servant loves his lord, that is to say only for reward: you must love Him for His goodness. True love does not require any reward, for that is to no avail. Love Him like a mother her child, like a bride her bridegroom. Your love for Him should not be cold or lukewarm, for if it is cold it is not love, and if it is lukewarm then it does not satisfy. Concerning lukewarm love God speaks gravely, and says: 'Those whom I find to be lukewarm, I spit out of my mouth.' Therefore I advise all of you who love to love God with a burning love and create for Him

a noble orchard in your heart, where He will gladly walk and behold that sweet-smelling and sweet-tasting spice of virtue.

In this orchard you should plant violets of humility, that is, the knowledge of our frailty; you should plant lilies of chastity there, and of decent living. Plant there as well the red roses of remembrance of the noble martyrdom of our Lord, and the marigolds of burning love. Plant there, too, your walnut tree of the hard labour of penance, for theron grow hard nuts. Plant pommegranates in your orchard, that is, the cooling toward worldly matters, and the noble fig tree, that is the experience of the sweetness of our Lord. Plant there the white and the red vines, which betoken the pure body of our Lord and his blessed Passion. Plant there as well the olive tree of communal love, and the noble palm tree, that is the triumph over all transitory things.

Once you have thus adorned this blissful orchard with these noble trees of virtues, where God will wish to walk, then you must place therein three kinds of birds, in order to adorn it still further. One of the birds shall be the yearning turtledove, who ever longs for her Bridegroom; the second shall be the singing nightengale, who sings throughout the summer night; the third shall be the lark, who at dawn begins to praise her Creator and glorifies Him all day long until the evening in blissful song.

In this orchard there must also be a blissful spring, and it is called communal love. From this spring shall flow four rivers, that wil render this orchard fertile.

In this orchard there must also be three diligent damsels, who will weed and tend it. One of them shall be Strong in Remorse for your Sins, the other Compunction of Conscience. These two tend your garden and pull out the weeds. The third damsel is called Confession; she prunes the trees and removes the unproductive branches.

Of the four rivers flowing from the spring of communal love, which render this blissful orchard fertile, one is called the Brook of Humility, the second Patience, the third Tranquility, and the fourth Mercy or Compassion.

Around this blissful orchard of the spiritual heart, in which God will wish to dwell, there must be a strong fence, which will prevent the children of common folk from climbing in it, or treading underfoot its aromatic herbs, or crushing or ruining the lovely flowers of virtues, for those children are still so young. The palisade of this fence shall be Holy Hope from top to bottom. The cross-posts used to close it off shall be True Faith with Good Works, for just as good works are dead

without faith, so too faith is dead without good works. The worker who will close up this fence is called Good Will. On the inside of this fence there shall also run a deep ditch, that is Humility that Exceeds the Power of Man.

This orchard shall have three gates, through which one may easily come and go. The first gate is the mouth, the second the ears and the third the eyes. At each of these three gates there shall be a courtly damsel to watch over it with spiritual discipline. The damsel who guards the gate of the mouth is called Righteousness, and she bars it with a bolt called Fear. This damsel does not let anyone in unless they are suited to walk in this orchard, because she fears being reprimanded in her performance of her office.

The second damsel, who is the guardian of the gates of the eyes, is called Heavenly Desire, and she bars them with a bolt that is called Tender Grace. She will not let anyone in unless he is peaceful; for grace is disrupted by means of strife.

The third damsel, who is the guardian of the gates of the eyes, is called Unity, and she bars them with a bolt called Love. This damsel will not let anyone in unless he is loving and benevolent.

Ah, by Lo, in this blossoming orchard of the spiritual heart, which is enclosed, is a delight to walk in and in which to pluck the dew-covered roses and the aromatic herbs! Amongst the blossoming flowers, that grow and bloom both winter and summer, there is bliss beyond bliss as beloved walks with beloved in this blissful orchard.

In this spiritual orchard there must be one common watchman, who is always awake and never sleeps. This watchman must guard and awaken the damsels who tend this orchard, weeding and pruning it. This common watchman is called Diligence, and he oversees all the tasks of the gardeners and the tenders, whether they are right and appropriate, in this orchard. This watcher blows on a flute: 'Take care, and perform good works with diligence, and take diligent care that you do not scorn anyone or judge them, lest you be scorned or judged by God. Do not hate any sinner, but rather avoid sins and guard yourself wisely against them.'

Now he blows again on a powerful horn, which is called Power, and he blows thus: "By my authority I sternly command all those who are ordered to stand guard over this orchard to do so faithfully. Guard yourself against the adders with the golden stripes, for they would eagerly poison the turtledoves. Guard yourself as well against the bucks in sheep's clothing, for they would eagerly gnaw on the

young vines and the fig trees and steal their noble fruit, which is the purity of conscience. Guard yourself against the sly foxes, who are so thoroughly possessed of false tricks. Guard yourself as well against the roaring lion, i.e. against pride, and even more against the crocodile (or hell dragon), for it struck fear into the heart of the knight with its roar, that is concerning too much secrecy in friendship.'

Do not love any person in particular, for mankind is frail, and that man readily learns to steal. Love all creatures with equal love, according to the Lord's dearest wish. If you guard your orchard thus by practicing good works and holy morals, then first and foremost I say to you that you are a good man. Why do I say 'good'?—Because your morals are good. And moreover I say 'man' because you are still worldly and capable of falling.

Now you may ask: "Is it possible for such people to fall?" and I say to you: "Yes, indeed!" Alas and alack, how much resistance will be encountered by those who are not of such character? Many a one thinks to remain standing who frequently falls down hard.

Dear friend of our Lord, if you guard yourself thus wisely and remain steadfast in your holy life and in your pure morals, then God in His goodness will lead you to his heavenly sweetness and show you in fatherly fashion His heavenly wonders, which are closed in His secretiveness to all those who are not thus prepared. And if you could travel into the heavenly taste unchallenged, I say to you that you are a spiritual child and nevertheless would need to come again and grow in love. Then you would not love those who wear wide shoes or tonsures, nor because they wear hair shirts or long mantels with a hood, nor would you be concerned with a religious demeanor, nor with the very fact whether they love you or not. Love their holy life and leave off your concern with the external body, and love God the more ernestly because He has given of Himself to them. Love those who persecute you with strife, or those who rob you of rest or honour, or friends or goods. Love poverty and rejection, shame and dishonour, whether you deserve them or not: then you will love what Jesus loved when he lived as a man. In this way you shall grow in godly virtues.

And if this sorrow gives you taste without injury, only then will you be a blessed soul without body. And when you have reached this level of goodness, you may yet ask yourself whether you lack anything or there is anything else that you need. I say to you, yes, there is! If you would learn more, go then again to your blissful orchard and take with

you four courtly damsels to help you discern what you lack. The first shall be called Wisdom, the second Discretion, the third Delight and the fourth Love.

With these courtly damsels you will inspect your orchard from top to bottom and all about. These four damsels will pluck from the orchard violets, lilies and dew-covered roses and make a blissful garland for the blessed soul and crown her Bride. They pick pommegranates for her in order to cool her, they seek out figs for their sweetness and softness, they pluck olives for her for their richness, they joyfully give her noble Cyprian wine to drink, they lead her to the spring of love, and wash her feet and inspect them closely to see whether they are the least bit soiled.

Then the blissful soul asks whether she lacks anything else. Delight answers her, and says that every pleasure and luxury is at her disposal. Wisdom responds to Delight and tells her to be quiet, and says that she is silly to allow her so few delights, and that God has so much more that she lacks. Now Discretion responds to Wisdom, saying that she should not anger Delight, for she is the damsel most familiar with Love and works the most with her assistance: "Let us work together and ask her what more she needs, and help her." When Love hears this, she stands up earnestly and says that she will have a blissful bed, whereupon the bride might rest with the Bridegroom, for which she has long yearned with severe suffering and diverse longing.

These four noble damsels go then to prepare this blissful bed, with great diligence, in the shade of the vineyard, near the clear spring of love, beneath the olives, next to the figs, upon the violets and the marigolds, amongst the lilies and the dew-covered roses.

This bed must be burning desire, flowing out from the core of the heart. The first sheet of this bed shall be Pure Conscience without Pangs, the second shall be Unity, free of all strange cares, to be used exclusively by the chosen Bridegroom, our Lord Christ. The damsel named Wisdom makes the bed with a duvet made of four kinds of fine purple cloth. The first is Obedience to Love, the second is Ignorance of Nobility, the third is Steadfastness against Worldliness, the fourth Kindness in Wisdom. The pillows of this bed shall be the forgetfullness of drunkenness of all that has been, and is, and shall be.

When this bed has been prepared in this way, they joyfully fetch the blissful bride and help her sleep sweetly with her noble Bridegroom. Love helps her up, and Delight covers her and closes her eyes; and they

sleep. Thus the soul is embraced and kissed by her Beloved, for whom she has so longingly and languishingly yearned, and then she embraces him in return and not against her will with a single, strong desire.

Now Love is careful, and she stands up and places Wisdom and Discretion at the foot of the bed; she bids them be quiet and stay silent, she gives them each a brush and bids them ward off the flies and the moths and the dust that rises form the flowers, so that they do not touch the blissful bed where the bride reposes. Thus blissfuly rests the soul with her noble Bridegroom, and is brimming with great delights.

Love bids the watchman be silent and sleep, and commands the leaves on the branches not to move or disturb them. Thus Love brings peace to this orchard, and the blissful soul spends the period of half a moment in this internal intercourse. Hearken, oh friend of our Lord, you who love and yearn, to why I say the period of half a moment. Though the blissful soul were to experience this all her days, even then it would seem no more than half a moment.

Wisdom wishes to wake her up, and tells her to comport herself wisely. Discretion helps her, and says that she is spoiling herself, for she is young and will live long. Delight complains to Love about this, and she commands her to be silent.

In the meantime the communal watchman awakes, for he had fallen asleep. He looks around in anger and calls out to Wisdom, asking her why she had not awoken him. Wisdom says that Love had forbidden her to do so. Discretion consoles the watchman and says that nothing but good had transpired, and all with Love's counsel. This fearful watchman says that he sees a dark sky approaching the orchard, and he fears a thunderstorm. "Indeed," says Wisdom, "I fear the same." Discretion says: "Our clothes will become wet and our bed soiled! Lord, when will our damsel wake up?" Fear is afraid of a thunderstorm and kneels down and tickles the blissful soul on the souls of her feet, and she awakens with a deep sigh and a tempered spirit, and lamenting woefully, with unprecedented wailing, she bewails her body. She asks that she be slain on account of sinful works, and asks that she be hanged out of spiritual desire, because her failings are so many and thinks that she is lost.

Lord, the blissful soul that experienced the greatest of joys and is hastily awakened and falls once again into such great woe, truly, that soul is to be pitied. Now Delight has fallen utterly silent, and Love looks on; Discretion dries her eyes, and Wisdom tells her to be silent; Hope promises to lead her home, and says that no harm will come to

her; Love promises her to put her where no one will awaken her, but where she will be able to enjoy her Beloved eternally, with full delight, without any hindrance of earthly matters.

Alas and alack, if this blissful soul laments thus about her failings, why are we so silent have so many more? Ah, surely, this is because we do not know our own failings. For it is surely true that if we knew our failings, we would bewail them. But he who ventures nothing, gains nothing: thus it is with me and many others. Because we have never received this from God, we do not miss it, and remain what we are. We have not received this from God nor have we sought it: therefore we have not lost it.

You friend of our Lord who has heard this lesson, and who hears it eagerly, pray to our Lord that he in fatherly fashion protect the nobility of your heart, where this blissful orchard shall be planted, so that no stream will flow there that does not spring from the living Fountain, from whence all good flows. Amen.

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Abbreviations

AASS	Joannes Bollandus [e.a], *Acta Sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur, vel al catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur*.
BHL	Socii Bollandiani, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis*. Vol. 1, *A-I*, Bruxellis 1898–1899. Vol. 2, *K-Z*. Bruxellis, 1900–1901. Vol. 3, *Supplementum*. Bruxellis, 1911. Vol. 4, Henricus Fros, *Novum supplementum*. Bruxellis, 1986.
Corpus Gysseling	Maurits Gysseling, *Corpus van Middelnederlandse teksten (tot en met het jaar 1300). Bouwstoffen voor een woordarchief van de Nederlandse taal*. Reeks I, *Ambtelijke bescheiden*. 9 Vols. Reeks II, *Literaire handschriften*. 6 Vols. Leiden, 1977–1987.
CSSN	C.C. de Bruin (ed.), *Codices Manuscripti Sacrae Scripturae Neerlandicae/Verzameling van Middelnederlandse bijbelteksten*.
DTM	Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters
FA	Fryske Akademy
GAG	Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik
LexMA	R. Auty [et al.], *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. 10 Vols. 1980–1999.
Literatur und Sprache	Hartmut Beckers & Helmut Tervooren (ed.), *Literatur und Sprache im rheinisch-maasländischen Raum zwischen 1150 und 1450*. 'Sonderheft' bij *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 108 (1989).
MB	L.-E. Halkin, R. Aubert, L. Milis [et al.], *Monasticon belge*. 7 Vols. Liège, 1890–…
MN	Miscellanea Neerlandica
MNW	E. Verwijs & J. Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch woordenboek*. 11 Vols. Den Haag, 1885–1952. [photomechanical reprint 1971]
MSB	Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen
MTU	Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters
NLCM	Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de Middeleeuwen
OGE	Ons geestelijk erf
PL	J.P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina*. 221 Vols. Paris, 1844–1890.
The sermon	Beverly Mayne Kienzle (red.), *The sermon*. Turnhout, 2000, Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental, Fasc. 81–83.
TNTL	Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse taal- en letterkunde
VL^2	Kurt Ruh [et al.] (ed.), *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*. 12 Bde. Berlin [etc.], 1978–2006.
VMNW	W.J.J. Pijnenburg [et al.], *Vroegmiddelnederlands woordenboek. Woordenboek van het Nederlands van de dertiende eeuw in hoofdzaak op basis van het Corpus-Gysseling*. 4 Vols. Leiden, 2001.
VMKVA	Verslagen en mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaams(ch)e Academie voor Taal- en Letterkunde

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